ROOTS OF SYNTHETIC THEOLOGY IN ISLĀM

A STUDY OF THE THEOLOGY OF ABŪ MANṢŪR AL-MĀTURĪDĪ (d. 333/944)

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This book is dedicated to
my brothers and sisters who died
as *shahīds* (martyrs)
for Muslim identity and Bosnian Freedom

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PREFACE

In 1981 Dr. Ahmed Smailovich, the then President of the Islamic Council of Bosnia-Hercegovina, appointed me as an Imam to the Islamic Cultural Center in Chicago. I have been fortunate to have met many good Bosnians and other members of the Center who encouraged me morally and financially to continue my graduate studies at the University of Chicago after I received my undergraduate Diploma from the University of al-Azhar. I will never forget the good deeds of Mr. Ilyas Rustempashic.

I have been even more fortunate to become a student of the late great Muslim scholar Professor Fazlur Rahman at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago. Professor Rahman's fatherly care made me at home and his scholarly guidance made my life different and my intellectual performance more enthusiastic. It was sad for me to hear that Professor Fazlur Rahman passed away in 1987.

I would like also to mention professors John Woods, Fred Donner and Robert Dankoff who help me a lot in pursuing my graduate studies at the University of Chicago.

In 1990 the Islamic Symposium of the Zagreb Mosque in Croatia invited Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas to attend the Third Symposium on *Ethics in Islam*. This was a good opportunity for me to know Professor al-Attas and his unique program at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. As a result, in the following year 1991 I accepted the invitation of Professor to come to ISTAC to teach Islamic Theology. In the personality of Professor al-Attas and his Islamic intellectual endeavor I have found a teacher whose commitment to Islamic scholarship can hardly be compared. Thus I was able to continue my work on Islamic theology which I started with Fazlur Rahman at the University of Chicago.

Unfortunate events in my country Bosnia-Hercegovina intercepted my work at ISTAC, and I was not able to revise thoroughly this work which is, in fact, my doctoral dissertation on the theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī submitted in 1986 at the University of Chicago under the mentorship of Fazlur Rahman. Although the basic ideas of it need not be changed, I thought of updating some points and bringing more comparative information to the original text. Encouraged by Professor al-Attas and other colleagues at ISTAC, however, I have accepted that this work be published in this form despite some technical imperfections and substantial shortcomings that are common to all first hand dissertations. Nevertheless, I hope that the reader of this book will find a good starting point in reading Synthetic Theology in Islam in the thought and work of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī who tried to make a genuine synthesis in Islamic theological thought.

I wish to thank God that I am still alive as a Bosnian and that I am able to write these lines at ISTAC. I am thankful to my brothers in Bosnia who are still defending their Muslim dignity and Bosnian freedom.

Thanks are due to Dr. Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud for his great support for my work and to Mr. Muhammad Zainiy Uthman for his diligent and exemplary labors in preparing an accurate typescript for the printer. I am grateful to Prof. Alparslan Acikgenc for his proofreading. I am much indebted to Mohd. Zaidi Ismail for making an index for this book.

Last but not least, I am grateful to my wife Azra and my children Amina, Kemal and Adila for their support, love and patience.

M. Cerić
Kuala Lumpur,
August 16, 1994.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ali	Ayyub, Ali, *'Aqīdat al-Islām wa al-Imām al-Māturīdī*
'Ālim	Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān b. Thābit, *al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim*
Ansāb	al-Sam'ānī, Abu Sa`'d 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad, *Kitāb al-Ansāb*
Bidāyah	al-Ṣābūnī, Nūr al-Dīn, *Kitāb al-Bidāyah min al-Kifāyah fi al-Hidāyah fi Uṣūl al-Dīn*
Creed	Wensinck, A. J., *Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*
Davidson	Davidson, Herbert, *Proofs for Eternity and Creation of the World in Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*
Farq	al-Baghdādī, 'Abd al-Qāhir, *Kitāb al-Farq bayn al-Firaq wa bayān al-Firqah al-Nājiyah minhum*
Fawā'id	Abū al-Ḥai al-Luknawī, *al-Fawā'id al-Bahiyyah fi Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah*
Fihrist	al-Nadīm, Ibn Abī Ya'qūb, *Fihrist*, edited and translated into English by Bayard Dodge (English title: *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*)
Fiṣal	Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwā' wa al-Niḥal*
GAL (S)	C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, (Zweite Den Supplementbänden Angepasse Auflage)
GAS	Sezgin, Fuat, *Geschichte Des Arabischen Schriftums*
Ghāyat	al-Āmidī, 'Alī b. Abī 'Alī, *Ghāyat al-Marām fi 'Ilm al-Kalām*
Guide	Maimonides, Moses, *The Guide for the Perplexed*
Hitti	Hitti, Philip, *History of the Arabs*

ITM	Gardet, Louis & M. M. Anawati, *Introduction a Théologie Musulmane*
Ibānah	al-Ash‘arī, ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl, *al-Ibānah ‘an Uṣūl al-Diyānah*
Iḥyā’	al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ulūm al-Dīn*
Iqdām	al-Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm, *Nihāyat al-Iqdām fi ‘Ilm al-Kalām* (English title: *The Summa Philosophiæ of al-Shahrastānī*)
Irshād	al-Juwainī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā Qawāṭi‘ al-Adillah fi Uṣūl al-’I‘tiqād*
Ishārāt	al-Bayaḍī, Kamāl al-Dīn, *Ishārāt al-Marām min ‘Ibārāt al-Imām*
Jawāhir	M. b. M. Naṣrullah b. Sālim b. Abī al-Wafā’ al-Qurashī, *al-Jawāhir al-Muḍī’ah fi Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyya*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
Kashf	Hajji Khalifa, Mustafa b. Abdullah Katib Chalabī, *Kashf al-Zunūn ‘an Asamī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn*
Maghribī	al-Maghribī, ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ, *Imām Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī wa ’Ārā’uhū al-Kalāmiyyah*
M. Fakhry	Fakhry, Majid, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*
Manāqib	al-Makki, Ṣadr al-A’immah Abī al-Mu’ayyad al-Muwaffaq, *Manāqib al-Imām al-A‘zam Abī Ḥanīfa*
Maqālāt	al-Ash‘arī, ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*
Miftāḥ	Tashküprīzādah, *Miftāḥ al-Sa‘ādah wa Miṣbāḥ al-Siyādah*
Milal	al-Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm, *Kitāb al-Milal wa’l-Nihal*
Muḥaṣṣal	al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn, *Muḥaṣṣal Afkār al-Mutaqaddimīn wa al-Muta’akhkhirīn min al-‘Ulamā’ wa al-Ḥukamā’ wa al-Mutakallimīn*
Murtaḍā	Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Murtaḍā al-Zabidī, *Itḥāf al-Sādah al-Muttaqīn bi Sharḥ*

	Asrār Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn
Muqaddimah	Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, translated into English by Franz Rosenthal(English title: *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*)
Musāyarah	Ibn al-Humām, Muḥammad b. Abī al-Waḥid, *al-Musāyarah fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām wa al-‘Aqā’id al-Tawḥīdiyyah al-Munjiyah fī al-Ākhirah*
Naẓm	Shaikh Zādah, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. ‘Alī, *Kitāb Naẓm al-Farā’id wa Jam‘al-Fawā’id*
Rahman	M. M. Rahman, *An Introduction to al-Māturīdī’s Ta’wīlāt Ahl al-Sunna*
Rasā’il	*al-Rasā’il al-Sab‘ah fī al-‘Aqā’id*
Rawḍah	Abū ‘Udhbah, al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin, *al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah fīmā bayna al-Ashā‘irah wa al-Māturīdiyyah*
SEI	*Shorter Encyclopædia of Islam*, 1953
Sharḥ	al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-‘Aqā’id al-Nasafiyyah*
TDMI	W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*
Tāj	Abū al-’Adl Qāsim Ibn Qutlūbugha, *Tāj al-Tarājim fī Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah*
Tabṣīr	al-Isfarā’inī, *al-Tabṣīr fī al-Dīn wa Tamyīz al-Firqah al-Nājiyah ‘an al-Firaq al-Hālikīn*
Tabyīn	Ibn Asākir, Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī, *Tabyīn Kidhb al-Muftarā fī mā Nusiba ilā al-Imām Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī*
Tamhīd	al-Bāqillānī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Ṭayyib, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*
Tawḥīd	Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*
Ta’wīlāt	Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Ta’wīlāt Ahl al-Sunna*
Tritton	Tritton, M. A., *Muslim Theology*
Uṣūl	al-Baghdādī, ‘Abd al-Qāhir, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-Dīn*
Wolfson	Wolfson, Harry Austryn, *The Philosophy of Kalam*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين
الصلاة والسلام على اشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين

Introduction

There are several approaches to surveying the history of Islamic theology (*'Ilm al-Kalām*). They include surveys of: (a) the classes (*ṭabaqāt*) and teachings of a specific theological school; and (b) the heretic tendencies of certain Muslim theological groups, made with the primary aim of establishing Islamic orthodox theology in the classical Muslim works. They also include accounts of Islamic theology, whose origins and development are prevalently construed either (c) in the context of the Muslim political and philosophic development or (d) in light of their methodological development in modern Muslim and western works, or, finally, (e) solely in the light of mere Judeo-Christian influences in some modern western works.

Thus, regarding the surveys of the works of type (a), i.e., the classes and teachings of a specific theological school, we have several classical works on the superiority of Mu'tazilites and their doctrines, such as those of: (1) Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319 h.) *Dhikr al-Mu'tazilah min "Maqālāt al-Islamiyyīn"*; (2) al-Qāḍi 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415 h.), *Faḍl al-I'tizāl wa Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah - Kitab: Faḍl al-I'tizāl wa Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah wa Mubāyanatuhum li Sā'iri al-Mukhālifīn*;[1] and *Firaq wa Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah*;[2] (3) Yaḥyā Ibn al-Murtaḍā (d. 840 h.), *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah*.[3]

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[1] These two works, together with a chapter on the same subject of al-Ḥakīm al-Jushamiyyi's (d. 494 h.) *Kitāb Sharḥ al-'Uyun Fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*, i.e., "al-Tabaqatan al-Ḥadiyah 'Asharah wa al-Thāniyah 'Asharah", were discovered and edited by Fu'ād Sayyid, (n.p.: al-Dar al-Tunisiyyah li al-Nashr, 1393/1974).

[2] Edition and commentary by 'Ali Sāmī al-Nashshār and 'Asam al-Dīn Muḥammad 'Alī (Cairo: Dār al-Maṭbū'āt al-Jāmi'iyyah, 1972).

[3] Yaḥyā Ibn al-Murtaḍā (d. 840 h.), *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah*, ed. by Susanna Diwald-Wilzer (Beyrut: Impr. Catholique, 1380/1961).

Here should also be added the most comprehensive and historically most important work on Mu'tazilism, namely, the book of Muhammad al-Khayyāṭ (d. 300 h.) *Kitāb al-Intiṣār wa al-Radd 'alā Ibn al-Riwandī al-Mulḥid.*[4] One of the most conspicuously noticed works on Shi'ism is that of Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. ca. 298 h.)[5] *Firaq al-Shī'ah.*[6] This type of work as their titles indicate, expatiates upon the historic merits or benefits of the specific Muslim theological schools as well as upon the superiority of that particular school's teachings. Therefore, the accounts of these works can serve only partially in attempting an objective and inclusive historical survey of the structure and content of Islamic theology as a whole.

The surveys of the type (b), i.e., the accounts of the heretical tendencies of some Muslim theological groups and the definition of the Islamic orthodoxy, came as "the result of the discussions between the chiefs of the orthodox Community and the heretics," as Wensinck has rightly observed.[7] This genre of Islamic theological literature is known in Arabic as *Maqālāt* works. Besides dealing with the main Muslim theological patterns, these works also include a comparative study of other religions at the time of the author concerned. There are numerous books, treatises and commentaries in this activity. In fact, there was no serious Muslim writer in the past who did not touch on this subject in one way or another. However, the following names of the authors of this kind of literature happen to be the most conspicuously recognized and used: al-Ash'arī (d. *ca.* 324 h.), al-Malṭī (d. 377 h.), al-Baghdādī (d. 429 h.), al-Isfarā'inī (d. 471 h.), Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456 h.), and al-Shahristānī (d. 548 h.).[8] (Al-Māturīdī also wrote a *Kitāb al-Maqālāt* about which we will talk in the following chapter and he also dealt with this subject a great deal in his *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* as we shall see).[9] As a matter of fact, these works are our major sources for any understanding of Islamic theology in its historical aspect or otherwise.

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[4] H. S. Nyberg, ed., *Kitāb al-Intiṣār wa al-Radd 'alā Ibn al-Riwandī al-Mulḥid* (Cairo, Impr. Catholique, 1344/1925). For more references on Mu'tazilism see "Bibliography" in Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah*, pp. 141-147.

[5] For more on al-Nawbakhti, see Muhammad al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist al-Ṭūsī*, Bibliotheca Indica, ed. A. Sprenger (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1855), p.98, sec. 208; Ibn Abi Ya'qūb al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadim*, ed. and trans. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 441.

[6] Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shī'ah.*, ed. by Muḥammad Ṣādiq Al Baḥr al-'Ulūm (Najaf: al-Maṭba'ah al-Haydariyyah, 1379/1957).

[7] A. J. Wensinck, "Les Preuves de l'Existence de Dieu dans la Théologié Musulmane," *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen 81* (1936-37): 41.

Hence, based on the data of the above heresiographical works and other major books on the general Muslim history, many a modern scholar, Muslim and western, was able to make his survey of the type (c), i.e., the accounts of Islamic theology, first, as seen in the historico-political milieu of a particular period, and, second in the fact of the introduction of Greek philosophy into the Muslim world in the end of the second century of the Ḥijrah. Some most notable examples of this kind of survey are the works of Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*;[10] Louis Gardet and George Anawati, *Introduction a la Théologie Musulmane*;[11] M. Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*;[12] Henri Laoust, *Les Schismes dans l'Islam*;[13] and among the

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[8] For more on this see H. Ritter, "Philologika III, Muhammedanische Haresiographen," *Der Islam*, 18(1929): 34-59.

[9] Cf. G. Vadja, "Le Témoignage d'al-Maturidi sur la Doctrine des Manichéens, des Daysanites et des Marcionites," *Arabica* 12 (1966): 1-38.

[10] Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton University Press, 1981).

[11] Louis Gardet and George Anawati, *Introduction a la Théologie Musulmane* (Paris: Payot, 1948), especially pp. 21-93.

[12] M . Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1962).

[13] Henri Laoust, *Les Schismes dans l'Islam* (Paris: Payot, 1977).

Muslim authors, we would like to mention only two, namely: Ahmad Amin, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*; [14] and 'Ali Sāmī al-Nashshār, *Nash'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī' l-Islām.*[15] What all these works have in common is, on the one hand, their emphasis on the political currents of a given period of Muslim history in which certain theological schools have emerged as the result of their reaction to that particular political situation. Such was the case, for example, with Shi'ism and Khārijism, two diametrically opposed reactions to the same political current of the 'Alī-Mu'āwiya controversy, as well as with Murji'ism, which came with its doctrinal liberalism as a reaction to rigid Khārijism, and which entailed political conformism as opposed to both the political opposition of the Shi'ites and the Khārijites to the Umayyad regime. On the other hand, the above works connect the emergence of the rational aspect of Islamic theology, Qadarism and Mu'tazilism, with the introduction of Greek philosophy into the intellectual life of Muslims. This rational, philosophical element in Islamic theology, is seen by those authors as a parallel to philosophy, while some have perceived it as a by-product of that philosophic movement. The particular examples of the latter approach are the works of T. J. De Boer, *History of Philosophy in Islam*; Musṭafā 'Abd al-Raziq, *Tamhīd li Tārīkh al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah*; and Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy.* [16]

Of course, the approach of type (d), i.e., the survey of different methods of Islamic theology which ultimately end up in the synthetic Islamic theology, permeates all the above mentioned approaches. What is specific about it though is the fact that some authors following the development of Islamic theology put greater emphasis on its major methods than on historical, political or other circumstances which determined its ultimate course. Two patterns of surveys of these theological methods are the most notable:

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[14] Ahmad Amin, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*, vol. III, (Cairo: n.p., 1952).

[15] 'Ali Sāmī al-Nashshār, *Nash'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī'l-Islām* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1977).

[16] T. J. De Boer, *History of Philosophy in Islam* (London: Luzac, 1933); Mustafa 'Abd al-Raziq, *Tamhīd li Tārīkh al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah* (Cairo: Matba'at Lajnat al-Ta'līf wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr, 1363/1944); and Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

1. NoConscious Theology > Heresy >
Rationalism > Traditionalism = **Orthodoxy**.

Two examples of this approach are Muḥammad Abū Zahrah's *Tārīkh al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah: Fī al-Siyāsah wa al-'Aqā'id*; and Tritton's *Muslim Theology*.[17]

2. NoConscious Theology > Rationalism >
Traditionalism > Mysticism = **Orthodoxy**.

An example of this is Duncan B. Macdonald's *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence, and Constitutional Theory*.[18]

Finally, the approach of type (e) is the one which gives the least understanding of the history, structure and content of the real theology of Islam. In fact, its aim is not the explanation of Islamic theology *per se*, but rather the justification of something else, in the particular case, either Jewish or Christian influences or both. Of course, no one can deny the doctrinal commonalities and the historic relationship between these three faiths, i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Qur'ān itself explicitly recognizes this commonality of faith by saying: "O People of the Book! Let us come to common terms as between us and you, that we worship none but God..." (3:64), and, as is well known, it equally treats the prophethood of Moses, Jesus and other important prophets along with that of the

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[17] Muhammad Abu Zahrah *Tārīkh al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah*, vol. I, *Fī al-Siyāsah wa al-Qawā'id* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, no date); and M. A. Tritton, *Muslim Theology* (London: Luzac, 1947).

[18] Duncan B. Macdonald *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence, and Constitutional Theory* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965). Cf. also Walter C. Klein "Introduction" to his translation of al-Ash'arī's *Ibānah*, (New Haven: The American Oriental Society, 1940).

Prophet Muhammad; and the Qur'ān acknowledges both the historic existence of Jews and Christians as two independent religious communities and a group from among them as being right: *"Not all of them are alike: of the people of the Book is a group* (ummah) *that stands (for the right); they rehearse the signs of God all night long, and they prostrate themselves in adoration"* (3:113).

Therefore, it is not a question as to whether or not there is a relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam but rather how much of that relationship helps human beings to reach their common goal of knowing their ultimate destiny in terms of their relation to One God. In other words, a certain amount of comparison between these three religions is inevitable for any serious understanding of Islam and its relationship to them, a realization which is common to all the above mentioned modern western works, especially that of Gardet and Anawati.[19] However, the difficulty arises when this comparison is aimed at undue emphasis on the merit of one over the other and in the case of Islam because of its later historical position to both Judaism and Christianity, when its origin and development are completely reduced to the Jewish or Christian sources or both. Two typical examples of this tendency are the book of Morris S. Seale, *Muslim Theology: A Study of Origins with References to the Church Fathers*,[20] the very title of which is indicative of the author's pre-determined purpose; and Wolfson's statement that: "...We shall try to show that, like the term *ma'nā* (which he explains to be of Christian origin), the term *ṣifah* is also derived from the vocabulary of the Christian Trinity."[21] Thus, according to Wolfson, the Islamic ideas of God's attributes of life, knowledge, and power are, in a definite sense, reducible to the Christian Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[22] It is, of course, hard to dispute Wolfson's knowledge of comparative religious studies, but it is even harder to imagine that any person who has even a rudimentary familiarity with Islam would come to such a conclusion. For, we have to realize that Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others alike live under the same human natural and historical conditions, that they all use the same tool of Language to express their thoughts, including religious thought, and that, therefore, their respective ideas, though being different in their essence, seem sometimes extrinsically to be similar or even identical to the ideas of others because of the language they all use. It is, then, impossible that a Muslim theologian of any backgroud would associate his theological ideas with the Christian Trinity in any way whatsoever. If, however, someone like Wolfson deliberately considers every Islamic theological idea to have its "origin" in Judaism or Christianity, (just as he can trace Jewish and Christian ideas back to an earlier stock of ideas), I am sure that he can find plenty of proofs for that; and the same goes for some Muslims, especially at the time of the controversies of the past, who make the Jewish, Christian or other influences scape-goats of their critique of their opponents.[23]

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[19] For a fuller discussion about these authors' views on the Jewish-Christian influence on Islam regarding Free Will, Predestination and other related issues see H. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 58-64; 68-70; and on the influence of Greek Philosophy as well as the Iranian and Indian traditions see *Ibid*, pp. 64-68.

[20] Morris S. Seale, *Muslim Theology: A Study of Origins with References to the Church Fathers*, (London: Luzac, 1964).

Except for the last reductionistic approach, all the above mentioned approaches to surveying the history of Islamic theology contribute in their own way to an understanding of the genesis and development of Islamic theological thought. However, in order for us to have a complete and inclusive picture of Islamic theology not only in its heresiographical drawings of Muslim heresiographers; nor from the mere perspective of the political reality of the times and the instantaneous philosophic impact; nor in the light of an artificial methodological evolution whose ultimate terminus is the finished product of Islamic orthodoxy which yields but small room to new solutions for the contemporary and possible future problems, indeed, in order for us to have a comprehensive view of the history of Islamic theology, its contemporary dilemmas and the implicatons of its future development, we must look for those latent elements in it which have been predominantly permeating through all historical stages and which are discernable in all of its methodical features. For human nature has never substantially changed; man's problems and concerns become different due to the historical, political, economic and educational environments he finds himself in. Thus, we may always find those Muslims for whom the Scripture of the Qur'ān is enough for their faith, and *ṭā'ah* (faithful obedience) to it is the only way to orthodoxy; and we may always encounter those who are satisfied with an addition of a certain amount of *bayān* (elucidation) on those somewhat more difficult issues; and we may always count on there being those Muslims who in considering *naql* and *'aql* (tradition and reason) see either a conflict or seek a synthesis between them. It is, then, in the light of these three features, i.e., *Ṭā'ah, Bayān* and *Naql-'Aql* conflict or their synthesis, that we view the historical development of Islamic theology and its contemporary and future possibilities. The theology of al-Māturīdī, the subject matter of our present study, encompasses all of these three features but with its special emphasis on the synthesis between Tradition and Reason as the only possible way to a reasonable theological *Weltanschauung.*

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[21] Wolfson, p. 119.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

[23] Cf. Ahmad b. Hambal's discussion about Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128 h.) and the Christian influence on him. *al-Radd 'Ala al-Zanādiqah wa al-Jahmiyyah*, 7-8, Cairo, 1393h. I think that this and other charges of the Muslims unintentionally helped those who tend not to recognize full originality of Islamic theology. Cf. M. Seale, *Muslim Theology*, who gives a full translation of this treatise, see pp. 96-125.

Faithful Obedience (Ṭā'ah)

Although the idea of *Ṭā'ah* (obedience) assumes the traditional or irrational approach to problems, in this case to religious or theological problems, it is not completely devoid of Reason. For one must also have a justification for adopting this traditional approach of *Ṭā'ah.* In the case of the early stage of Islam, this *Ṭā'ah* was adopted, first, because it aimed at the breakdown of the old tradition, and, second, because the community was not yet exposed either to internal conflict or external influences.

This first aspect may be further elaborated by the fact that the early Muslim generations saw in Islam both the resumption of primordial monotheism and, more importantly, the removal of old social injustice. They thus lived in the hope that Islam would provide a better life both here and in the hereafter. To attain either of these two goals, one had obediently to accept the new perspective because it comes not from immediate experience but was supposed to create one. Thus, on the one hand, the very idea that Islam came from the authentic divine source, and, on the other, that it was different from the existing ethical, social and political system, had enough force to gain the total acceptance of the early Muslim community.

When we speak of the early stage of Islamic theology as *Ṭā'ah,* we mean the total commitment of Muslims to the theoretical premises of Islam, without consciously questioning their implications or their possible logical conflicts. This, however, does not mean complete irrationality, but rather an acceptance of the idea that Reason is short of explaining everything. On the basis of this assertion we may explain Imam Malik's doctrine of *bilā kayf* (a non-committal or non-questioning) attitude to which the Sunnite theologians often had recourse when they saw that there was no rational explanation for a certain theological proposition.

Elucidation (Bayān)

As long as there was no noticeable internal conflict within the Muslim community, this *Ṭā'ah* attitude was both justifiable and strong. But, when a series of conflicts erupted within the community, this collective *Ṭā'ah* lost its previous rationale and strength. It was, for example, hard for all Muslims to accept unquestioningly the assassination of the caliph 'Uthmān, to witness indifferently the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, and to acquiesce obediently to the unfortunate events at Karbalā'. Nevertheless, the community had to continue its life, and, therefore, there had to be a *Bayān* (elucidation or justification) of these unpleasant events. That is to say, the Muslim community had by now created its own tradition, and some events were not compatible with the fundamental principles of Islam on which this tradition was based. Furthermore, the rapidity of these events left no time for calm reasoning or reflection, but required an immediate response to the difficult question as to who was wrong and who right in these bloody struggles or, what was the relationship between Islamic theory and practice. The first reaction to this dilemma came from the Khārijites, who, revolted by the injustice of Mu'āwiya and upset by the undecisiveness of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, proclaimed both parties wrong and, consequently, came up with the extreme theological judgement that a Muslim who commited mortal sin can no longer be regarded as a legitimate member of the Muslim community. This, in turn, opened a series of other extreme theological views. In counter-reaction to this Khārijite view came the stance of the Murji'ites, who, seeing the moral utopianism of the Khārijites, connected their theology with political conformism to the Umayyad regime. Worse than this, Abdullah b. Sabā' went so far as to proclaim 'Alī b. Ṭālib as the incarnation of God.

As is well known, all these extremist groups disappeared in the course of Islamic history and have only served orthodox theology as bad examples. Two different groups within the realm of Islam, however, have survived throughout the whole history of Islam and still hold fast to their early differences, namely, the Sunnites and the Shi'ites. The former has always represented the main stream of the Muslim community, while the latter has always tried to be duly recognized and sometimes even to dominate. Just as the Shi'ites developed their own political philosophy, they evolved their own theological one as well. Here, however, our focus is on the theological development of the Sunnites, the majority part of the Muslim world, rather than the Shi'ites.

At first, the idea of Sunnism implied political positivism rather than theological synthetism or Islamic orthodoxy. In fact, this early political Sunnism was developed to repel the opposition of the political theocratism of the Shi'ites. Thus, in this political sense of Sunnism, all groups that objected to the idea of the Shi'ite theocracy, such as the Murji'ites, Qadarites, Jabrites, and so on, were considered to be the Sunnites. It was only later, when Sunnism came to represent ideological or theological synthetism, that the term was reserved for Islamic orthodoxy as opposed to all extremist theological groups regardless of their political attitudes.

At this point of the stage of *Bayān* in Islamic theology, the most visible figure of Islamic theological moderation of orthodoxy was Abū Ḥanīfah, founder of one of the four main Islamic legal schools. He is not only important for us here because of the relation of al-Māturīdī's thought to his, but also because he probably was the only person at this stage who dealt seriously with theological problems. In fact, Abū Ḥanīfah left behind more books or tracts on Islamic theology than any of his contemporaries. Five of these tracts have been preserved, namely:

(1) *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*
(2) *al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ*
(3) *Kitāb al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim*

(4) *Risālah ilā 'Uthmān al-Batti*
(5) *al-Waṣiyyah*

There are some questions as to the origin of these tracts which are ascribed to Abū Ḥanīfah. Wensinck thinks "...that it (*al-Fiqh al-Akbar*) represents the view of orthodoxy in the middle of the eighth century A.D. on the then prominent dogmatic questions; and that it reflects the discussions of the Kharijites, Shi'ites and Kadarites, not those of the Murji'ites, nor those of the Mu'tazilites."[24] Our aim here is not to discuss Abū Ḥanīfah's theology *per se*, and the origin of his tracts, but rather to contend that they definitely represent his theological assertions and reflect, as Wensinck has rightly put it; "...the discussions of the Kharijites, Shi'ites, Kadarites, not those of the Mu'tazilites." That is to say, Abū Ḥanīfah's theology is aimed at finding a moderate or inclusive theological way and at repelling those extreme elements of the Khārijites, the Shi'ites, the Qadarites, the Jabrites, and the like. It is not yet rational in the sense that it still lacks a definite system of reasoning, and it is no longer *Ṭā'ah* theology because it has in itself certain theological judgements which are based on human experience rather than merely inspired by the Scripture.

Therefore, by the stage of *Bayān* in Islamic theology we mean that period when the Muslim theologians were responding to the immediate challenges of their times with an intent either to condemn or to justify certain actions of the past. This "theology of elucidation" has rational elements in its procedure but is still far from the point to be called rational in the full sense of that term.

Naql-'Aql: Conflict or Synthesis?

Full development of Islamic theology came with the introduction of the more refined and more systematically worked out theological method. There is a general feeling among the students of Islam that the rational way in Islamic theology, and in other fields of Islamic studies as well, came as the result of the introduction, however indirect, of Greek philosophy into the intellectual world of Islam at the end of the first century of Islam. On the whole, this assertion, of course, is true. However, I think that even if the Muslims had not known all the details of Greek philosophy, there would still have been some sort of rational impulse in their system of learning. For, Islam, i.e., the Qur'ān and the example of the Prophet, is full of rational premises and rational explanations. Of course, Islam is first and foremost a religion and therefore contains in its structure certain unconditional dogmas. But unlike many religions, it is not irrational in the sense of suppressing Reason, although it is not overly rational in the sense of espousing pure philosophy. Therefore, from the very beginning, Islam had assumed a certain amount of rationality which in the stage of *Ṭā'ah* was not really needed and in the stage of *Bayān* was not well worked out.

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[24] Arent Jan Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1932), p. 124. For more on this question see Ayyub 'Ali, *'Aqīdat al-Islām wa al-Imām al-Māturīdī* (Bangladesh: al-Muassasa al-Islamiyya, 1983), pp. 86-135.

As is often the case with any religion, so it was with Islam, too, that a conflict between Reason and Dogma has inevitably arisen. The first initiative of this conflict came on the part of Reason, and the first exponents of it were called the Mu'tazilites. Supported by the rational side of Islam and influenced by Greek philosophers, they were the first Muslim thinkers who saw in Reason all possible solutions for theological and other religious problems. This pure rationalism of the Mu'tazilites could not but provoke the other side of Islam, pure dogma. But probably, had it not been for interference by the state into the theological issues at this stage, which tipped the balance to favor Reason, this first conflict between *Naql* and *'Aql* in Islam would not have had such a great impact on the subsequent development of Islamic theology. Nevertheless, in this conflict of *Naql* and *'Aql* there were always those Muslims who were able to recognize the original Islamic intent and to maintain a balance between Reason and Dogma and who tried to work out a proper system for realizing that goal.

Al-Māturīdī is one of the best examples in this regard. In fact, as our study will show, he was one of the most original orthodox Muslim thinkers of the early period. Indeed, without any exaggeration, al-Māturīdī may be regarded as the most genuine founder of Islamic synthetic theology. He was not only able always to keep the balance between Tradition and Reason, but was also able to show the validity of Tradition and the full strength of Reason within the context of that Islamic Tradition. As we shall see, many points concerning the early and later development of Islamic theology up to his time, points which are thought to be the discovery of modern scholarship, had already been made by al-Māturīdī in the fourth/tenth century.

Undoubtedly, al-Māturīdī's most important contribution to Islamic theological thought was his development of the Islamic theological theory of knowledge. The significance of his theological theory of knowledge, although not always fully recognized by either Muslim or non-Muslim scholars, is no less than that of al-Shāfiʿī's theoretical framework of Islamic law. Furthermore, al-Māturīdī's scientific way of research, his sense of thorough analysis, and his objective critical mind reserve for him a place among the most serious thinkers of all times. We will see that al-Māturīdī was not afraid of any theological question, was not reluctant to take up any difficult issue and was not disinclined to any rational possibility.

The Present Work

Because it is impossible to cover all aspects of al-Māturīdī's theological activity in a study such as this, the primary aim of this work is to concentrate on those Islamic theological points which we find to be his most original ideas and his genuine contributions to the overall development of Islamic theology. In fact, al-Māturīdī could be looked at from the aspect of his theological and philosophical ideas, his account of Islamic heresy, and, finally, culminating in the aspect of his genuine foundation of Islamic theoretical orthodoxy. However, we will mainly deal in this work with his theology and the formation of Islamic synthetic theology.

Thus, in Chapter One, we will present the account of his life and works, with a special emphasis on his theological *magnum opus*, the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*; in Chapter Two, we will elaborate on his method in *Kalām*, namely, his vindication of *Kalām* and his religious theory of knowledge; in Chapter Three, we will extensively discuss al-Māturīdī's views concerning the world, God, and man; and, finally, in Chapter Four, we will touch on the most important points of al-Māturīdī's influence on subsequent Islamic theology.

Chapter One

Al-Māturīdī's Life and Works

1. *Life*

Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmud al-Ḥanafi al-Mutakallim al-Māturīdī al-Samarqandī — who was given by his later followers other epithets too, such as *Imām al-Mutakallimīn* (the chief of the theologians), *Muṣaḥḥih 'Aqā'id al-Muslimīn* (the reformer of Muslim beliefs), *'Alam al-Hudā* (the sign of guidance), *Ra'īs Ahl al-Sunnah* (Chief of the orthodox Muslims), which indicate his prominent place among the Sunnite theologians as well as the reformative role he had played in a final shaping of the Sunnite orthodox *Kalām* perspectives[1] — lived and worked in the later-formative, classical age of Islamic civilization. That was a period when the main branches of the religious and cultural expressions of Islam, i.e., jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), tradition (*Ḥadīth*), exegesis (*Tafsīr*), philosophy (*Falsafah*), theology (*Kalām*), mysticism (*Taṣawwuf*) and other subcultural activities in the Muslim world, had been set on their natural course; and when both the political (viz. 'Alī — Mu'awiyah; Khārijites — Shī'ītes and Umayyids — 'Abbāsids) and theological (viz., Jahmites, Qadarites, Murji'ītes and Anthropomorphists) controversies had already left traumatic traces on the minds of all the Muslims.[2]

While the place of his birth is certain, viz., **Māturīd** or **Māturīt**,[3] "in the rabad, now a village to the north-west of town, a country residence for wealthy citizens",[4] a locality (*maḥallah, qaryah*) in Samarqand,[5] Transoxiana,[6] the exact date of al-Māturīdī's birth is unknown. It is curious that not only had many major Muslim historians, biographers, and heresiographers (e.g., al-Ṭabarī d. 923, Ibn Khaldūn d. 1406, Ibn Khallikān d. 1282, al-Ṣafadī d. 1363, al-Baghdādī d. 1037, and Shahrastānī d. 1153) entirely neglected al-Māturīdī, but that even the Ḥanafite *Ṭabaqāt* sources offer no more than a scanty account of his life and ideas. "The earliest mention of al-Māturīdī and his doctrine in a non-Māturīdite work, so far known, is in the *Kitāb al-Niẓāmī* written by the Ash'arite Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Fūrak (or al-Fūrakī), the grandson of the more famous early Ash'arite scholar Abū Bakr b. Fūrak (d. 406/1015), who was a preacher at the Niẓāmiyya school in Baghdād during the time of Niẓām al-Mulk and died in 478/ 1085/6.[7]

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[1] Cf. *al-Rasā'il*, head line.

[2] For more on the periodization of the Islamic civilization see, Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. i, Chicago, 1974, pp. 22–45; George Hourani, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, London, 1985, pp. 2–5.

[3] Cf. al-Sam'ānī (d. 562/1166), *Kitāb al-Ansāb*, Leiden-London, ed., 1912, p. 496.

[4] W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, London, 1958 p. 90; In his *Mu'jam al-Buldān* (ed. Wüstenfeld, Leipzig, 1866 [vol. iv,

Therefore, only by speculation from the date of death of his early teachers, namely Muḥammad b. Muqātil al-Rāzī (d. 248/862)[8] and Nuṣair b. Yaḥyā al-Balkhī (d. 268/881),[9] can we suggest an approximate date of his birth.

378] Yaqūt b. 'Abdullāh (d. 626/1229) mentioned the name under erroneous spelling- ماتيرب ; SEI, art "al-Māturīdī"

[5] For more on the geographical situation of Samarqand see, Aḥmad al-Maqdisī (d. 390/999) *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fi Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm*, selected and edited by Ghazi Talimat, Damascus, 1980, pp. 223–24; "General Index", TDMI, p. 506; G. Le Strange, *The Lands of Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Muslim Conquest to the Time Of Timur*, Cambridge, 1905, pp. 8, 460, 463–65, 471, 472.

[6] See, "Geographical Survey of Transoxiana", TDMI, pp. 65–179.

[7] Quoted by M. Götz, "Māturīdī und sein Kitāb Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān", *Der Islam*, XLI, (1965), p. 50, n. 3; cited and identified by W. Madelung, "The Spread of Māturīdism and the Turks", ACTAS, IV CONGRESSO DE ESTUDOS ÂRABES ISLÂMICOS, COMBRA-LISBOA 1A 8 DE SETEMBRO DE 1968, Leiden, 1971, p. 111, n. 4.

[8] Cf. "Muqaddimah", *'Ālim*, p. 7; Ali, p. 265; "Muqaddimah", *Tawḥīd*, p. 2.

[9] Cf. *Fawā'id*; Ali, p. 265.

Thus Muhammad M. Rahman concluded that he was born in 235/850,[10] while Ayub 'Ali put it in 238/853,[11] and Ibrahim and al-Sayyid 'Awadain even vaguely stated that his birthdate was before 248/862.[12] It appears, then, on the account of a *riwāyah* that al-Ash'arī was born in 260/873 [*Miftāḥ*, vol. ii, p. 22], and in accordance with another in 270/883 [Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt*, vol. ii, p. 446], that al-Māturīdī was born about three decades before al-Ash'arī, the fact which indicates that the former must have already started the Sunnite synthetic theological movement long before the latter declared his orthodox adherence after forty years of his pure rational, Mu'tazilite *Kalām* view.

Be that as it may, it seems certain that al-Māturīdī was born during the reign of the 'Abbāsid caliph, al-Mütawakkil (232/847– 247/861), and that he lived a long life which lasted almost ten decades, during which he witnessed twelve 'Abbāsid caliphs, the last of them being al-Muttaqī (329/940–333/944),[13] and enjoyed the apogee of the regional government of the Sāmānids (204/819–395/1005) in Khurasān and Transoxania.[14]

As for al-Māturīdī's death, almost all the biographers, though giving sketchy reports on his life, agree that he died in Samarqand in 333/944[15] and was buried at **Jakardiza**, "a burial-place for the 'Ulamā' and the notables,"[16] which lies to the East of the old city of Samarqand[17] where al-Māturīdī's grave is still shown today.[18]

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[10] Rahman, p. 28.

[11] Ali, p. 265.

[12] "Muqaddimah", *Ta'wīlāt*, p. 10. Cf. *Tabyīn*, p. 39; Ali, p. 265.

[13] Cf. C. E. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1967.

[14] For more on the Sāmānids see, al-Narshakhī, *History of Bukharā*, English trans., R. N. Frye, Cambridge, Mass., 1954; French, *Description Topographique et Historique de Boukhara par Mohammad Nerchakhy*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, [Bibl. Geog. Arab. I], Leyden, 1870; Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, Leyden, 1879.

[15] Cf. *Fawā'id*, p. 195; *Jawāhir*, pp. 130–31; Murtaḍā, p. 5; *Tāj*, p. 5; GAL, vol. i, p. 209; GAL (S) p. 346; GAS, vol. i, pp. 604–6. Only Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshabandī (d. 791/1389) said that al-Māturīdī died in 335/946 [cf. Rahman, p. 26] and Ṭāshkūprizādah in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah* [cf. "Muqaddima," *Ta'wīlāt*, p. 3, n. 1], after stating that he died in 333, added that it is also said that he died in 336. In his *Miftāḥ*, however, he mentioned 333 without any further comment; see vol. ii, p. 22.

Next to nothing is known about al-Māturīdī's family background, his personal and family life, and his close relatives.[19] Some attempts to trace al-Māturīdī's descent back to the renowned companion of the Prophet, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī,[20] whose hospitality the Prophet enjoyed for seventeen months when he migrated to Madina, and thus to claim his Arab origin, though well intended, do not have any strong backing in the accounts of his life. Apart from the fact that al-Māturīdī himself, as far as we know from his writings, had nowhere referred to having descended from Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī's descent, and that some historians, biographers, and heresiographers had not taken him into their account at all, it is hardly conceivable that those who had, would have failed to stress such an important fact , had it been true. On the contrary, in some of the major Ḥanafite *Ṭabaqāt* sources reporting on al-Māturīdī we do not find even a mention that al-Māturīdī was in fact al-Anṣārī,[21] and moreover those who mention that possibility, cast doubt on it with the remark "if that is true" (*in ṣaḥḥa dhālika*).[22]

Let me make clear here that I do not intend to exclude the possibility that al-Māturīdī may have been really of Arab origin and from Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī's stock, nor, for that matter, to argue that he was otherwise, but I simply want to point out that there is no convincing evidence to substantiate the conjecture of his being an Anṣārī.[23] Doubtless, al-Māturīdī's descent (*nasab*) from the family of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī if that were true (*in ṣaḥḥa dhālika*), would bring us closer to his personality and would throw some light on it.

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[16] TDMI, p. 89, n. 5; Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī mentioned Samarqand, his burial-place; see Murtaḍā, p . 5.

[17] Cf. Rahman, p. 35.

[18] Cf. TDMI, p. 90, n. 10.

[19] On the tendency of neglecting al-Māturīdī and his teaching we shall elaborate more later.

[20] Murtaḍā, vol. ii, p. 5; On the margin of folio 1 of *Tawḥīd*, Photocopy of Cambridge University Library ms. Add. 3651, University of Chicago Library; Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, p. 498; Cf. also Rahman, p. 27; Ali, pp. 263–64.

[21] Cf. *Fawā'id*; *Jawāhir*, *Tāj* .

[22] Murtaḍā, vol. ii, p. 5.

In my opinion this uncertainty about his origin comes either from the fact that the claim of his being from Abū Ayyūb's descent has no ground at all, or because the descent (*nasab*) itself was not a matter of so great significance in Transoxiana in those days that it required special attention, or, especially in the case of al-Māturīdī, the high position in knowledge(*'Ilm*) required the assignment of a recognized Muslim stock such as that of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī for which his later followers argued. Whatever the case might be, it is certain that al-Māturīdī gained his reputation as an original Muslim thinker through his intellectual endeavor and his strong Islamic identity rather than through his claims on Arab or other nobility.

Al-Māturīdī, it should be observed here, wrote all his works in Arabic, except one, as far as we know, *Waṣāyā wa Munājāt* , which he wrote in Persian.[24] His style of Arabic, however, is awkward, obscure and hard to follow which is most probably due to the fact that he thought in Turkish or

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[23] M. M. Rahman found three circumstantial facts to support the claim that al-Māturīdī was an Arab and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī's descendant: (1) A daughter of al-Māturīdī was married to al-Ḥasan, the son of Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ash'arī, a descendant of the stock of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī. The point here lies in the idea of *kafā'a* (equality in social status) which the Arabs were retaining while in the distant lands; (2) one of al-Māturīdī's teachers, Abū Naṣr al-'Ayyāḍī, was a descendant of the clan of Sa'd b. 'Ubādah al-Anṣārī; and (3) in 95/713, after the treason of the inhabitants of Samarqand and the second conquest of Soghd, Qutaiba b. Muslim ordered that the people of Samarqand evacuate the town which then was occupied by the Arabs. (Rahman, p. 27). While all these points are in themselves true, they do not establish categorically the fact that al-Māturīdī was an Arab or al-Anṣārī.

[24] See, Rahman, p. 51.

Persian but wrote in Arabic.[25] That al-Māturīdī wrote in Arabic is natural because the use of Arabic was the rule in his time. But we should also recall that the Sāmānids were responsible for the revival, promotion and development of modern Persian literature as we know that Firdawsī (ca. 934–1020) wrote his early poetry in this period (the Sāmānids') and that Bal'amī, the vezir of Manṣūr I (961–76), translated an abridgment of al-Ṭabarī's history (into Persian).[26] In addition to this, translation of the Qur'ān into both Persian and Turkish was also produced in the Sāmānid period.[27] All this indicates that both these languages, together with Arabic, were used, if not very well in written, but certainly in spoken form in al-Māturīdī's time. In addition to that, from an examination of his Arabic style we may conclude that the Arabic language was most probably not native to him and thus his pure Arab descent may be put into question as well.

Likewise Tritton's assertion that Abū al-Qāsim Isḥāq b. Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (d. 342/953) may have been a brother of al-Māturīdī is just another attempt to come closer to our scholar, but one which again fails to firmly stand up to close scrutiny.[28] For example, Fathalla Kholeif has rightly noticed that the names of these two men are different and that no historian has mentioned that al-Māturīdī had had a brother by that name.[29] So both of these facts exclude the possibility that the above mentioned Abū al-Qāsim al-Māturīdi had been al-Māturīdī's brother. This Abū al-Qāsim may, on the other hand, be very easily identified with al-Qāḍī Abū al-Qāsim Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, famous as al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī, (d. 340/951) who was actually a disciple of Imām al-Māturīdī.[30] Neither do we have any evidence about al-Māturīdī's possible travel outside of Samarqand or Transoxania, nor any trace about his possible relationship with either of his two likewise Sunnite contemporaries, i.e., al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935) who lived and worked in Baṣra and Baghdād and al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933) who lived and worked in Egypt. Furthermore, al-Māturīdī's teaching, unlike that of his contemporary al-Ash'arī,[32] aroused neither the attention nor the opposition of the Mu'tazilites and other *Kalām* theologians during his lifetime.[33] Thus, we have absolutely no reference to him and his ideas from which, either by way of acceptance or rejection, we might learn some details about the justification of those who approved his *Kalām* or the criticism of those who opposed it.

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[25] On his Arabic style we shall have to say more later.

[26] Cf. Hitti, p. 463.

[27] Cf. Abdülkadir İnan, *Kur'ân-ı Kerîm'in Türkçe Tercemeleri Üzerine bir İnceleme*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 1961, 7–8.

[28] A. S. Tritton, "An Early Work from the School of al-Māturīdī" *JRAS*, 1966, parts 3,4, pp. 96–99.

[29] Cf. "Muqaddima", *Tawḥīd*, p. 3.

Nevertheless, there are two ways in which we may come to know more about our thinker-scholar in terms of his intellectual growth and his academic contribution to Islamic civilization; first, by an assessment of the political and intellectual state of the Muslim empire in general in al-Māturīdī's day and age and of the Sāmānid rule in Transoxania, under which he lived, in particular; and second, by a closer look at the sources of his education and his own intellectual performance, that is, his works.

2. *The Muslim Empire and the Sāmānids in the 9th–10th centuries*

As for the overall political situation of the Muslim empire at the time, two phenomena are observable; first, the disintegration of the power of the central government of Baghdād, whose symptoms had been already tangible by the time of al-

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[30] *Fawā'id*, p. 195.

[31] See, "Taḥawism" in Ayub Ali, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1963).

[32] Cf. M. Allard, *Le Problème des Attributs Divins dans la doctrine d'al-Ašʿarī et de ses premiers grands disciples*, pp. 312ff.

[33] W. Madelung, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

Ma'mūn's reign (813–833),[34] and second, as the result of that, the establishment and strengthening of several local governments across the land. This became more visible by the time of al-Mutakallim who, by the way, was "the first caliph in the period of decline"[35] as well as the first 'Abbāsid caliph to be assassinated by the Turks. All caliphs after him had only nominal function in keeping the political idea of the caliphate alive, while the real political power of the caliphate at Baghdād was in the hands of the Turkish generals, and the *de facto* control over the major regions of the Empire was assumed by the local dynasties. Thus, for example, we find in North Africa, and then Egypt and Syria the Fāṭimids (297–567/909–1171), in al-Jazīrah and Syria the Ḥamdānids (293–394/905–1004), in Eastern and central Arabia, with their center in Baḥrayn the Qarāmiṭah (281-end of 5th century /894-end of 11th century), in Ṭabaristān and Jurjān the Ziyārids (315–c. 483/927–1090), in Persia and Iraq the Būyids (320–454/932–1062, in Sīstān the Ṣaffārids (253-c.900 /867–c.1495), in Khurāsān and Transoxania, the Sāmānids (204–395/819–1005), under whose rule our scholar lived, and many other less important provincial dynasties.[36]

On the intellectual level the main streams of the religio-Islamic disciplines of knowledge and learning had been both methodologically and substantively well developed by the time of al-Māturīdī.[37] In fact, al-Māturīdī was faced with one of those *cul-de-sac* situations in the process of the development of Islamic civilization when the general feeling of many Muslim scholars was that the genuine possibilities in the search for an Islamic knowledge and faith had been exhausted and that the role of the subsequent generations was just to understand the given solutions and follow them accordingly. In matters of theology, which concerns us the most here, both the patterns of tradition (*Naql*) and reason (*'Aql*) seemed to have stamped their particular methodological marks and hardened their doctrinal paths. This became especially so as the result of an open encounter between tradition and reason concerning the origin and nature of the Qur'an which was offically initiated and incited by the caliph al-Ma'mūn and represented by the parties of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the traditionalist,[38] and the Mu'tazilites, the rationalists. In this first official struggle between tradition and reason, reason won, but only for a while. Tradition soon staged a comeback with the help of the caliph al-Mutawakkil. This victory of tradition over reason further widened the gap between the two and made the synthesis between them more difficult. One confronted a choice either to adopt this or that method and, consequently, to accept this or that doctrine.

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[34] For example, among the first independent regional dynasties was the dynasty of the Ṭahirids (205–59/821–73) that emerged in the time of al-Ma'mūn. Cf. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*, (Edinburg, 1967), pp. 99–100; *The Cambridge History of Islam*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975), pp. 90–135.

[35] Hitti, p. 467.

[36] Cf. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*; Hitti, pp. 461–483; *Cambridge History of Islam.*

[37] The Major schools of Islamic Law had been formed, i.e., Ḥanafite, Mālikite, Shāfi'ite, Ḥanbalite, and Ẓāhirite; The collection of traditions completed, i.e., *al-Kutub al-sittah*; the exegetical *Isnād* based method shaped by al-Ṭabarī, and the Baṣra and Kūfa schools of Arabic grammar had been worked out.

As for Islamic philosophy (*Falsafah*) and mysticism (*Kashf*), as two co-relative fields of Islamic theology, while very much present at the time, they were kept aside from this tradition-reason controversy. The former, although in its infancy, which was first seriously expressed in the thought of the first genuine Arab philosopher Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Isḥāq al-Kindī (d. ca. 256/870), tried to become a legitimate part of the process of development of Islamic doctrine, became nevertheless, more and more independent with its own ethos, in the person of Muḥammad b.

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[38] For the controversy between Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the Mu'tazilites concerning the Origin of the Qur'ān see, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Radd 'alā al-Zanādiqah wa al-Jahmiyyah*, Cairo, 1393.

Muḥammad b. Tarkhān al-Fārābī the Turk (d. 339/950). It finally became an independent body of knowledge whose content was utterly rejected by both the traditionalists and the Mu‘tazilite rationalists but its logical procedure, although not well appreciated by the former, was used in one or another form by both sides.[39]

Al-Kindī enjoyed the patronage of three ‘Abbāsid caliphs: al-Ma’mūn, al-Mu‘taṣim (833–842), and al-Wāthiq (842–847), the period during which the translation movement of Greek and Indian writings was thriving and the Mu’tazilite influence in the Muslim world reached the highest point. He, while praising philosophy as such, tended to stay, in his theological thinking within the boundaries of the "orthodox" *Kalām* as he had no problem in invoking the authority of the Qur’ān, a commitment which led him to radically object to the philosophical idea of the eternity of the world. Nevertheless, "He never doubted for a moment that the harmony of the findings of Greek philosophy with the revelation of the Koran could be fully established, given the necessary goodwill and patient research".[40]

Al-Fārābī, while not denying the Islamic religious truth as such, did , however, diminish the priority of the Scripture in doctrinal matters by his unreserved adoption of Greek philosophy and his introduction of the rational philosophical way in finding the basic truth about the world, God and man's relation to them. In fact, by his acceptance of the idea of the eternity of the world and his adoption of the Neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation, he started the process of the alienation of philosophy from Islamic theology proper which,[41] by the time of his successor Ibn Sīnā (428/1037),[42] reached an irreconcilable stage until, through the labor of al-Ghazālī (505/1111),[43] Islamic philosophy lost its battle indefinitely. There are three main issues on the basis of which Islamic theology could not reconcile with philosophy: 1) that there is no resurrection for bodies, 2) that God knows only universals, and 3) that the world is eternal.[44]

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[39] For more on the development of Islamic philosophy see, T. J. De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, (London, 1933); Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 1983).

[40] A. J. Arberry, *Reason and Revelation Islam*, London, 1957. Thus in al-Kindī we have more a philosopher of *Kalām* than the philosopher of philosophy. For more on al-Kindī see, al-Kindī, *Rasā’il al-Kindī al-Falsafiyyah*, (ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Hādī Abū Zaidah, Miṣr, 1369/1950); M. Fakhry, p. 66–94; William Lane Craig, *The Kalām Cosmological Argument*, (The Macmillan Press LTD, London, 1979), pp. 19–37.

Mysticism, on the other hand, which in its initial stage tended to be independent of theology *per se*, was only to be recognized as an integral part of the content and form of Muslim theological thought through the labor of al-Ghazālī. We may safely state that the early Sufis of Islam, e.g., al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), al-Junaid (d. 297/910), al-Shiblī (d. 334/945) Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) and others, had no aspiration for their Sufi exercise to become a part of the *Kalām* debate, but rather to be a privileged experience of theirs as they tried to reach and feel the presence of God. It was only when al-Ghazālī in 488 set himself to seek light in Sufism, and read the books of four of those mentioned above that this third element (*Kashf*) was added to the whole picture of Islamic theology.[45]

In such circumstances of the decentralization of the central government of Baghdād and of the creation of the regional political centers, al-Māturīdī had the luck to live in one of those most politically stable regions of his time, Khurāsān and Transoxiana, under the rule of the Sāmānid dynasty at Bukhārā about whose rulers Ibn Khallikān had this to say:

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[41] For more on al-Fārābī see, Ibrahim Madkour, *La Place d'al-Fārābī dans l'ecole philosophique musulmane*, (Paris, 1934).

[42] And on Ibn Sīnā see, M. Fakhry, pp. 107–162.

[43] See, al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah.*

[44] Cf. M. Watt, *Faith and Practice of Ghazālī*, (Kazi Publication, Chicago, 1982), p. 37.

[45] Cf. Duncan B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*, (New York, 1965), pp. 176–77.

> As for the Sāmānid rulers, they were the Sulṭāns of Transoxiana and Khurāsān. They were the best of the Sulṭāns in their conduct, so much so that when one of them was inaugurated, he would be called the Sulṭān of the Sulṭāns and no one would have called him otherwise. He would have become a sign for the rest of the Sulṭāns. (The Sāmānid rulers) usually had held fast to justice, religion and knowledge.[46]

It is, then, to be expected that, in such an atmosphere of political stability, social justice, religious inclination and scientific endeavor, principles to which Sāmānid rulers were dedicated, the necessary conditions were available for free and honest intellectual work. Besides, being far from the controversial theological and other issues of the central land which were a stark fact at the time, the region of Khurāsān and Transoxiana was on the border line of the Muslim world in Central Asia whose intellectuals, being at such a geographical location, were concerned about protecting the Islamic doctrine from the immediate external attacks which could come from all sorts of dualism, i.e., Manichaeanism, Dayṣānism, and Marcionism as well as those of Judaism and Christianity, rather than about pursuing the circular and unpromising argumentation of the opposing groups which surrounded the center of the Muslim empire. This, in consequence, oriented the whole intellectual pursuit in the region to the search for a genuine meaning of religion as such and of Islam as its best content and form, and, thus, to be more in the line of a creative and firm orthodox Islam (*al-Islām al-Muḥkam*), rather than to the mere superficial disputes about traditional formalities and frivolities which had accumulated in the course of history and which, in many instances, had lost their original meaning and force. Hence, Aḥmad al-Maqdisī, the geographer of the tenth century travelling in the "Eastern Region", i.e., the Sāmānid territory, could felicitiously observe that:

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[46] *Wafāyāt*, vol. iv, p. 245.

> The Eastern district (*Iqlīm al-Mashriq*) is the most splendid one, has the greatest number of great men and scholars, is the spring of good (*khair*), the safe place for knowledge, the pillar of and the most grandiose fortress for the orthodox Islam (*al-Islām al-Muḥkam*). Its rulers are the greatest of all as well as its soldiers. The people, there, are very brave, their thinking is right ... There, the Fuqahā' are being elevated to the degree of kings.[47]

And by his closer look at the inside of the region the same author wrote:

> It is one of the most advanced districts in science (*'Ilm*) and jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), and the Sufis (*al-Mudhakkirūn*), there, have a remarkable reputation. There are many Jews there, few Christians, and different kinds of Magians ... There, the *madhhabs* of the people are sound, except for Sijistān and (two) vicinities of Harāt: Karūkh and Istirbiyān where there are many Khārijites. There is a strong presence of the Mu'tazilites and a clamor of the Shi'ites and the Karrāmites in Naysābūr. Otherwise, the whole region is of the Ḥanafite madhhab except for the areas of Kūrah al-Shāsh, Īlāq, Ṭūs, Nasā, Abiyward, Ṭirāz, Ṣanghāj, Suwād Bukhārā, Sinj, al-Dandānaqān, Asfarāyn, and Jūyān, where the Shafi'īte *madhhab* is practiced. In these areas the practice is in accordance with their (i.e. the Ḥanafite and the Shafi'ite) *madhhab*. There is some uproar[48] between them in Harāt, Sijistān and al-Marwīn. There,

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[47] *Op. cit.*, 220

[48] For more on the friction between the Ḥanafites and the Shāfi'ites see, Madelung, *op. cit.*

> two qādis must be always appointed. The preachers of the above excluded areas, including Naysābūr, are the Shafiʿītes as well as of one of the mosques of Marw … The majority of the people of Tirmiz are Jahmites, those of al-Raqah are Shiʿites and those of Kundur are Qadarites.[49]

It suffices to mention the names of only a few of the scholars who came from the region of Transoxiana and Khurāsan to substantiate Maqdisī's assertion and to realize the vigor of intellectual activity there in different fields of Islamic knowledge prior to and during the time of al-Māturīdī. In the science of *Ḥadīth* the names of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256) and Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Naysābūrī (d. 261) speak for themselves, in *Fiqh* the names of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī, a Shafiʿīte (d. 365), and Abū al-Laith al-Samarqandī, a Ḥanafite (d. 373) are well known, in *Kalām* the names of Abū Bakr b. Fūrak al-Iṣfahānī, an Ash'arite (d. 406), and Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbdullāh al-Kaʿbī, a Muʿtazilite (d. 317) are conspicuously recognizable, in philosophy and geography the name of Abū Zaid Aḥmad al-Balkhī (d. 322) is commonly acknowledged,[50] and in literature the name of ʿAbd al-Mālik al-Thaʿlibī al-Naysābūrī (d. 429) is well reputed.[51] And if we add to that the testimony of Ibn Sīnā about the royal library of Bukhārā, which he visited during his stay at Bukhārā as the Sulṭān Nūḥ b. Manṣūr (976–97) summoned him to give him medical attention and in which, said Ibn Sīnā: "I saw books whose very names are as yet unknown to many — works which I had never seen before and have not seen since,"[52] we can conclude that al-Māturīdī lived in the midst of an inexhaustible fund of knowledge which, no doubt, had a great impact on the formation of his mind and on the final crystallization and formulation of his thought.

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[49] Maqdisi, pp. 236–37.

[50] *Fihrist*, vol. ii, Biographical Index, p. 971.

[51] Cf. Aḥmad Amīn, *Ẓuhr al-Islām*, vol. i, pp. 262–276.

[52] Arthur J. Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology*, (London, 1951), pp. 12–13; Consult Ibn al-Athīr, vol. ix, pp. 69 seq.; Ibn Abī Usaybiʿah, vol. ii, p. 4.

3. *Education*

It was, however, the circle of the Ḥanafite scholars from whom al-Māturīdī received his general Islamic education and the system of the Ḥanafite school procedure to which he owes the most for making his intellectual spirit genuine, solid and competitive as it were. Thus we are told that he was a pupil of four prominent Ḥanafite scholars of his time:

(1) Abū Naṣr Aḥmad Ibn al-'Abbās Ibn al-Ḥusain al-'Ayyāḍi al-Anṣārī al-Faqīh al-Samarqandī (death date unknown)
(2) Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn Isḥāq Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Jūzajānī (death date unknown)
(3) Muḥammad Ibn Muqātil al-Rāzī (d. 248/862)
(4) Nuṣair Ibn Yaḥyā al-Balkhī (d. 268/ 881).[53]

Little, if anything, is known about the lives of these four Ḥanafite scholars. About Abū Aḥmad Naṣr al-'Ayyāḍī what we know is that he was a descendant of Sa'd b. 'Ubādah al-Anṣārī, that his two sons, Abū Aḥmad Naṣr al-'Ayyāḍī and Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-'Ayyāḍī were also great scholars; that to al-Māturīdī he was both a colleague, as they both studied under Abū Sulaimān Mūsā al-Jūzajānī, and a teacher, as al-Māturīdī was younger and took lessons from him; that at the time of his death, he had forty students who continued his teaching; and that, due to his excellence in *Fiqh*, he was given the honorific title al-Faqīh al-Samarqandī. Abū Naṣr al-'Ayyāḍī was killed by the Turks near the frontier of Asbijān during a battle in Shawaghara. Nothing is known of his possible writings.

As for Abū Bakr al-Jūzajānī, he was actively involved in both the *Furū'* (*Fiqh*) problems and the *Uṣūl* (*Kalām*) issues.

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[53] Cf. Ali, p. 268; Rahman, p. 30.

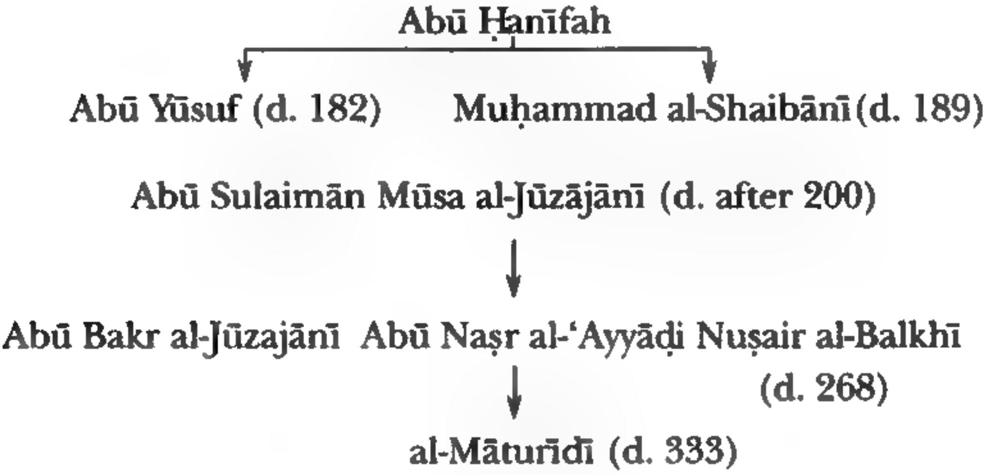
Two ascribed books, *Kitāb al-Farq wa al-Tamyīz* and *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, bear witness to that. Unfortunately, this is all that we know about him.

Al-Māturīdī's third teacher, Muḥammad b. Muqātil al-Rāzī, was an immediate student of Imām Muḥammad al-Shaibānī, Abū Muṭī' al-Balkhī, and Abū Muqātil Ḥafṣ al-Samarqandī who studied under them *Fiqh* and *Kalām* , while in *Ḥadīth*, he took lessons from Wāqi' b. al-Jarrāḥ.[54] He served in various administrative and judicial posts, and died as a chief justice of Rayy.

The least is known about the fourth of al-Māturīdī's teachers, namely, Nuṣair Ibn Yaḥyā al-Balkhī. We know only that he was a student of Abū Sulaimān Mūsā al-Jūzajānī, Abū Muqātil Ḥafṣ al-Samarqandī, and Abū al-Muṭī' al-Ḥakam al-Balkhī and that he died in 286/881.

What is certain about all of them, however, is the fact that their *Sanad* reaches back to Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767) and that it was passed on to al-Māturīdī. Thus we have:

I


Abū Ḥanīfah
Abū Yūsuf (d. 182)
Muḥammad al-Shaibānī (d. 189)
Abū Sulaimān Mūsa al-Jūzājānī (d. after 200)
Abū Bakr al-Jūzajānī
Abū Naṣr al-'Ayyāḍi
Nuṣair al-Balkhī
(d. 268)
al-Māturīdī (d. 333)

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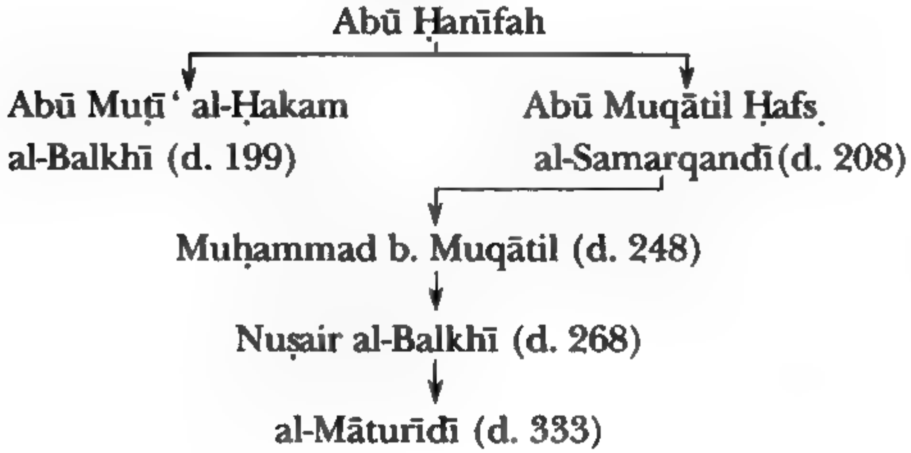
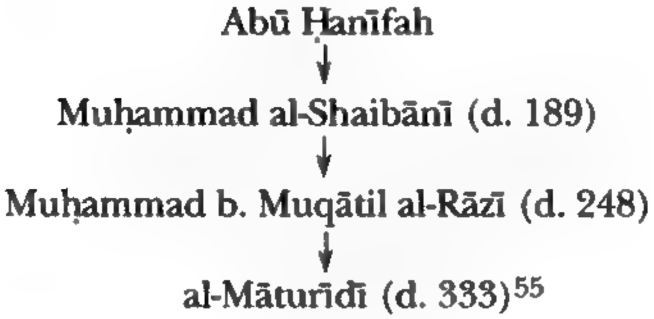
[54] A student of Abū Ḥanīfah.

II


Abū Ḥanīfah
Abū Muṭī' al-Ḥakam al-Balkhī (d. 199)
Abū Muqātil Ḥafṣ al-Samarqandī (d. 208)
Muḥammad b. Muqātil (d. 248)
Nuṣair al-Balkhī (d. 268)
al-Māturīdī (d. 333)

III


Abū Ḥanīfah
Muḥammad al-Shaibānī (d. 189)
Muḥammad b. Muqātil al-Rāzī (d. 248)
al-Māturīdī (d. 333)[55]

It would be, however, unfair — indeed, quite unjust to wrap al-Māturīdī in the strait jacket of the Ḥanafite *madhhab*, despite the fact, as we have seen, that he was educated in the heart of the Ḥanafite body of knowledge, and raised in that tradition notwithstanding the widespread assertion that he was one among many Ḥanafites in matters of *Fiqh* and a simple follower of the Ḥanafite *Kalām* doctrine who only knew how to expound the most difficult theological problems which had been already dealt with and mostly solved either by Abū Ḥanīfah himself or by some of his students or later followers. No doubt, al-Māturīdī was all of that, a Ḥanafite and a follower of the Ḥanafite doctrine. Yet it is exactly this fact, that is, that al-Māturīdī was a Ḥanafite, which makes us allow him to breathe on his own and to let him unroll his thought on his own merit. Muḥammad Biltājī's point that the immediate students of Abū Ḥanīfah, e.g., Abū Yūsuf, Muḥammad, and Zufar b. al-Hudhail (d. 158), unlike those of the rest of Islamic Law schools, namely, the Mālikite, the Shāfi'ite and the Ḥanbalite, were not simply the transmitters (*Ruwāt*) of Abū Ḥanīfah's legal opinions, but had their own methods in approaching the *Fiqh* problems which often led them to different solutions from those of their master, is well taken here.[56] There is no reason to wonder about that if we recall the fact that Abū Ḥanīfah himself was the most independent jurisprudent among the early founders of the Islamic legal schools as he adopted the free judgement approach (*Ra'y*) in matters of legal concern, on the basis of which he refused to accept certain juristic ḥadīths of his master Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī if they did not meet his methodological requirements.[57] It is, then, right there in the example of their master that the Ḥanafites have learned how to be, within a legitimate degree, autonomous in their thought and, in turn, responsible for their concerned judgements in both the juristic and theological issues.

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[55] Cf. Ali, p. 269; Rahman, p. 31.

In the person of al-Māturīdī we have one of the best examples of this relatively independent attitude and one of the most advanced applications of it in the field of Islamic theology. Although a faithful Ḥanafite, al-Māturīdī felt no need to use the authority of his master Abū Ḥanīfah, or others for that matter, for each and every theological point he was making. In fact, we find that in his main theological work, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, al-Māturīdī explicitly mentions Abū Ḥanīfah's name only four times,[58] and in one of these rare instances, while speaking about the human's capacity of power to act in two opposing ways (*al-Qudrah li al-ḍiddaini*) and about the theological question as to whether God charges man with a duty which is beyond man's power (*Taklīf mā lā yuṭāq*), he uses the following remarkable language: "This is the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah and his group of followers (*Hādhā qawl Abī Ḥanīfah wa jamā'atihi*)"[59] Hence, from the foregoing points we may conclude that it is not a matter of what and how much al-Māturīdī learned as a student of and from the Ḥanafite masters of his time, but rather of how much he was able to utilize that school's method and of how effectively he was capable of applying it to the demanding problems of his day. At this point, then, we are at the threshold of al-Māturīdī's intellectual performance, that is, his works.

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[56] Muḥammad Biltājī, *Manāhij al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī fi al-Qarn al-Thānī al-Hijrī*, Riyāḍ, 1977, vol. i, pp. 84–100.

[57] Cf. al-Muwaffaq, *Manāqib Abī al-Ḥanifah*, vol. i, p. 114.

[58] See, *Tawḥīd*, pp. 263, 382, 303, 304.

4. *Works*

As I have already indicated, al-Māturīdī lived at a time when genuine creativity, at least in the field of Islamic dogmatics, was not very common and, so, when only serious and outstandingly bold minds of Muslims dared to search for new possible roads in their intellectual adventure; al-Māturīdī must be regarded as one of them; he took up that challenge of his time and scored original and outstanding points in different fields of Islamic thought by the final round of his rational career.

For al-Māturīdī the challenge had two overall dimensions: first, the vindication of the total teaching of Islam against potential external attacks of all sorts of dualism, i.e., Persian Manichæism, Dayṣānism, and Marcionism as well as those of Judaism and Christianity, and, second, the consolidation of the Islamic doctrine internally which had been already severely shaken by the diametrical oppositions of the brutal traditionalism of the Anthropomorphists and dry rationalism of the Mu'tazilites.

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[59] *Ibid*, p. 263.

In order to meet these goals, he stretched his mental efforts mainly into three areas of Islamic learning, namely, to the sciences of the principles of a) Islamic jurisprudence (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*), of b) exegesis (*Tafsīr*), and of c) theology (*Kalām*), whereby he sought to find his own answers to questions in these respective fields. However, his attention was especially centered around the theological issues of his time to which he mostly devoted his exegetical writing as well. This is, it should be noted here, why he became especially known in this regard, and why his name was attached as the eponym to a special Sunnite theological school.

a) *Jurisprudence*

In the field of Islamic jurisprudence, besides certain legal opinions which are discernible in his unique exegetical work, *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*, al-Māturīdī, we are told, had dedicated special books to this area of Islamic knowledge and learning under different titles. Four of these are singled out conspicuously, namely:

(1) Kitāb al-Jadal fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh[60]
(2) Kitāb Ma'ākhidh al-Sharā'i' fī al-Fiqh[61]
(3) Kitāb Ma'ākhidh al-Sharā'i' fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh[62]
(4) Kitāb al-Uṣūl or Uṣūl al-Dīn (or al-Fiqh)[63]

Neither al-Qurashī[64] nor al-Murtaḍā[65] mention these titles. They only mention his five books on *Kalām*, including *Ta'wīlāt*, but they add: "And he had other books than these (*Wa lahu ghair dhālika min al-kutub*)." Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1114) in his *Tabṣirat al-Adillah* mentions only two titles in this regard: *Kitāb Ma'ākhidh al-Sharā'i'* and *al-Jadal*, adding also that al-Māturīdī wrote two books refuting the Qarāmiṭah called: *al-Radd 'alā al-Qarāmiṭah*, one intended to refute their *Uṣūl* and the other their *Furū'*.[66]

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[60] See, *Tāj*, p. 59; *Fawā'id*, p. 195.
[61] See, *Ibid.* I think that this work is the same as No. (3).
[62] See, *Ibid*; *Tāj*, p. 59.
[63] Cf. GAL, vol. i, p. 209; GAL (S), vol. i, p. 346; Rahman, p. 45.
[64] *Jawāhir*, p. 130, No. 397.
[65] Murtaḍā, *op.cit.*, 5.

Unfortunately, we have nowhere any trace of these books except the last one, viz., *Kitāb al-Uṣūl*, which, according to Brockelmann,[67] is available in the Libraries of Berlin (Gotha), Bodeleinæ (Oxford), Cairo and Cambridge.[68] This book, however, according to Rahman,[69] can be "easily identified with" an anonymous *Risālah* in Bodeleinæ, Cambridge and *Dār al-Kutub* (Cairo).[70] The opening lines of these manuscripts, says Rahman, read as follows: *al-Ashyā' allatī yaqa'u bihā al-'ilm, thalāthatun:* 1) *al-ḥawāss al-salīmah* 2) *al-'uqūl al-mustaqīmah* 3) *al-akhbār al-ṣādiqah*, the fact that led him to conclude that it is a small treatise on *Kalām*, and, therefore, might be an appendix to al-Māturīdī's main theological work: *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*.[71] However, that assertion remains to be proven.

From the titles of these books it is apparent that we are dealing with works on the principles of Islamic Law, rather than detailed laws. So, should the other three books, too, be discovered some day, we should have a very interesting and new situation in our search for the early development and formulation of Islamic Law. For, it is known and generally accepted that the first Muslim scholar who made a genuine contribution to the systematization of the principles of Islamic Law was al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/819), according to the report of Ibn Khaldūn,[72] although, as we have it from al-Makkī (d. 568/1172), he was preceded in that effort by an equally distinguished Ḥanafite Imam, Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798). "He (Abū Yūsuf)," said al-Makkī, "was the first person who authored books in *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* in accordance with the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfah."[73] If, then, the above mentioned al-Māturīdī's works on the fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence were to become available to us, al-Makkī's observation could be further clarified and the process of the formulation of the codes of Islamic Law could, on the one hand, receive a totally different perspective, and, on the other, this would bring the Ḥanafite role in that process more closely and precisely to our attention. For, al-Māturīdī was a very well informed scholar about the fundamental principles of the Ḥanafite school, the one which he deliberately chose to adhere to.

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[66] Cf. M. Tanci, "Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī" in *Ilahiyet Fakultesi Degrisi*, I –II, 1955, pp. 8–9.

[67] GAL, vol. i, p. 209; GAL (S), vol. i. p. 346.

[68] Cf. Wilhelm Pertsch, *Die Arabischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha*, Gotha, 1878, vol. I, p. 283; Fihrist Dār al-Kutub, vol. II, p. 43; A.J. Uri, *Bibliothecæ Bodleinæ Codicum MSS.* (Orientalium Catalogue, Paris, 1953), vol. I, p. 64; E.H. Palmer, *Catalogue of Arabic, Persian and Turkish MSS.* (The University of Cambridge), p. 124.

[69] Rahman, pp. 44–45.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] *Ibid.*

From what we can see so far, it seems quite apparent that al-Māturīdī, as far as Islamic jurisprudence is concerned, was more interested in the aspect of its fundamental principles (*Uṣūl*), than in its detailed legal derivations (*Furū*‘). For, in the final analysis, he wanted to create and maintain a close relationship between the fundamentals of faith (*Uṣūl al-Dīn*) and that of jurisprudence (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*). Thus Ḥajjī Khalīfah (d. 1067/1658), talking about the science of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, quotes ‘Alā al-Dīn[74] al-Ḥanafī's definition of it from his *Mīzān al-Uṣūl* which reads: "Behold that *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (the foundations of Islamic Law) is a branch of *Uṣūl al-Dīn* (the foundations of Islamic theology) and, therefore, it is necessary that the writings on it be in accord with the author's beliefs."[75] Further speaking about *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*,

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[72] *Muqaddimah*, pp. 428–433.

[73] *Huwa awwal man waḍa'a al-kutub fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh 'alā madhhab Abī Ḥanīfah. Manaqib*, vol. ii, p. 245.

[74] Died ca. beginning of the sixth century of Hijrah.

[75] *Kashf*, vol. i, pp. 13–14.

Ḥajjī Khalīfah divides the writings of his authorities (*Asḥābuna*) into those who combined the *Uṣūl* with the *Furū'* and those who did not, adding "Among those who combined the *Uṣūl* (the foundations of faith) with the *Furū'* (the branches, viz., applied *fiqh*) was al-Māturīdī, the example of which are his books: *Ma'khadh al-Shar'* and *Kitāb al-Jadal*."[76] The question of the relationship between the foundations of *Kalām* and those of *Fiqh* is one of the utmost significance and is related to a range of other branches of Islamic knowledge such as that of ethics, economics as well as politics. This question is of such an importance that it could be a special subject of a serious study. In the course of our study we will try to emphasize al-Māturīdī's approach to this problem as well as to point out his contribution to its solution.[77]

In any case, al-Māturīdī's contribution to Islamic jurisprudence is minor compared to his contribution to exegesis and theology. This is probably because he felt no great need to busy himself with *Fiqh* problems after they had been diligently worked out by his capable predecessors Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf, Muḥammad al-Shaibānī, and others. But it may also be because we are simply deprived of knowing his contribution in this area due to the fact that his works have not reached us. It is interesting to note that the scribe of his *K. al-Tawḥīd* starts almost every new paragraph by saying "*Qāla al-Faqīh Abū Manṣūr, raḥimahu Allāh,* (Said the *Faqīh Abū Manṣūr* ...)."[78] This could even lead us to believe that his contribution to jurisprudence was perhaps greater than that to theology. To prove this, however, we need more evidence which, for the time being, is missing.

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[76] *Ibid*, vol. i, p. 114.

[77] I am grateful to Prof. Fazlur Rahman for his making me aware of the significance of this question when he made this remark on my Library paper which he supervised : "This is a problem of the highest order since al-Ash'arī's *Kalām* is hardly suitable as a foundation for *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*."

[78] Cf. *Tawḥīd*

b) *Exegesis*

If al-Māturīdī's figure in the field of Islamic jurisprudence was somewhat dimmed by the grandeur of the authority of the early masters of the Ḥanafite *madhhab* , i.e., Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf, al-Shaibānī and others, in the field of Islamic exegesis (*Tafsīr*), however, he found a freedom to develop his ideas. Not only was he unencumbered within the frame of the Ḥanafite school, but in the large extent of the exegetical activities prior to his time, he saw a big gap between the pure *Naql* (traditional) approach and the *'Aql* (rational) understanding of the text of the Qur'ān. In fact, the *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān at the time implied little more than a more or less blind imitation and dry repetition of the previous interpretations which, wanting in sound reason, a rational person could hardly accept or even comprehend. What al-Māturīdī wanted, then, was to aptly demonstrate how reason can be easily taught the very nature of the revelation and, consequently, how the two can be brought into a solid harmony. Therefore, his book, *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah* or *al-Qur'ān* was the first attempt made by a Ḥanafite and a Sunnite, or, indeed, a Shi'ite, to free the interpretations of the Qur'ān from unnecessary haggadism and masoretism that had already crept into the exegetical works of even as prominent an exegete as al-Ṭabarī, and to make the Qur'ānic message respond to the historical context of the day.[79]

There seems to be unanimous agreement in the historical reports on al-Māturīdī about the authenticity of *Kitāb Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah* . The claim of 'Alā' al-Dīn that it was not written by al-Māturīdī himself, but originated from dictations to his students, has no ground.[80] A careful comparison between this work and al-Māturīdi's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* will, undoubtedly, demonstrate not only the close similarity in their content and style, but the full identity of their being from the same author.[81] The work is reported under different titles such as: *Kitāb Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah* (a standard one); *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*;[82] *Kitāb Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*; *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*; *Ta'wīlāt al-Māturīdī*; and *Kitāb al-Ta'wīlāt*, but all these titles refer to one and the same book authored by al-Māturīdī.

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[79] For more on *Tafsīr* prior to al-Māturīdī and his contribution see, Rahman, pp. 77–94.

[80] 'Alā' al-Dīn Abū Bahr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Aḥmad al-Samarqandī al-Ḥanafī (d. 540/1145), a pupil of Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī, wrote a commentary on this work, entitled: *Sharḥ al-Ta'wīlāt*

Fortunately, *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah* has been preserved in many manuscripts in different libraries of the world, thirty nine of which M. Rahman has listed in his very good introductory work on this book.[83] To this list we should add also a copy of Microfilm (negative) which is available at Regenstein Library (Chicago).[84] Although as important as any other major work in both the sciences of *Tafsīr* and *Kalām*, and as essential as al-Māturīdī's theological opus,

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al-Mansūb ilā al-Shaikh al-Imām 'Alam al-Hudā Abī Manṣūr al-Māturīdī. Cf. Rahman, p. 71. It is worth noting here that in classical Arabic writings we usually find the third person used (*Qāla fulān …*) as an author's work is presented. This is because most of these writings were the result of the teacher's dictations to his students who then would put them in a book. Probably, 'Alā' al-Dīn was misled by this fact to his conclusion.

[81] On the discussion and the arguments about this point see, *Ibid*, pp. 71–77; "Muqaddimah", *Ta'wīlāt*, pp. 17–18; Ali, pp. 282–84. All these studies, by comparison of this work to al-Māturīdī's *K. Tawḥīd*, have strongly demonstrated that the language and the style in both works are that of al-Māturīdī.

[82] I think that this emphasis on the idea of *Ahl al-Sunnah* (Sunnism) is a creation of al-Māturīdī's later followers because, as we will see, al-Māturīdī nowhere explicitly mentions this term in his *K. Tawḥīd*, nor does he, by any means, indicate in it to this concept. See, the subtitle, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* of this study.

[83] See, Rahman, pp. 42–43; Manfred Götz also made a good study of this book. See his "Māturīdī und sein Kitāb Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān" in *Der Islam*, 41, 1965.

[84] The copy was made from Süleymaniye Umumi Kütübhanesi Carullah Efendi Library ms. 48, 49. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Umumi Kütübhanesi, 1977; call No. BP 31.

Kitāb al-Tawḥid in determining the genesis and early development of Islamic theology,[85] the *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah* has not yet seen the light of day in a complete edition. There is only a partial edition of it made by Ibrāhīm and al-Sayyid 'Awḍain in 1971 which covers Sūrahs of *al-Fātiḥah* (pp. 5–29) and of *al-Baqarah* (pp. 30–317), up to verse, 134, (the whole Sūrah of *al-Baqarah* comprises 286 verses).[87] The editors based this edition on three manuscripts: (1) Kōprūlū, ms. No. 48, (2) a photocopy ms. of Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah No. 6, and No. 27306 which is made up of 3 parts (*ajzā'*), and (3) on one original ms. in one volume in which the beginning of every verse is written by red ink and with clear handwriting. On its margins there are commentaries and explanations. "This ms.," said the editors, "was the basis for our edition because of its completeness and clarity."[88]

Al-Māturīdī's exegetical method is a new one. It is a verse by verse interpretation of the Qur'ān, a procedure which is common to almost all the Muslim exegetes. What makes al-Māturīdī's procedure novel, however, is the fact that he very often takes a particular verse, explains it and then brings many other Qur'ānic statements in order to clarify it. This approach leads us to assert that al-Māturīdī was more concerned with the pursuit of the subject-matter of the Qur'ānic content as a whole, rather than simply concentrating on certain lexical, grammatical, or historical narrations which was the usual procedure of his predecessors.

But by far the most important aspect of al-Māturīdī's exegetical contribution is to be noticed in his tendency toward a freer and more fundamental rational-conceptual and theological interpretation of the Qur'ān, a method which he called *ta'wīl* as opposed to traditional approach (*tafsīr*), i.e., a strictly *isnād* based one.[89] Furthermore, al-Māturīdī had in his *ta'wīlāt* two objectives in mind: first, to grasp the meaning of the particular verse of the Qur'ān in its historic, dogmatic, and sometimes, grammatical context, and, second, to confront that with a particular *Kalām* school or schools at the time, especially with that of the Mu'tazilites, and then to give his own refutation of it, if necessary, and support his point of view by other verses and his own rational proofs, if the context calls for it. He seldom provides the *Ḥadīth* interpretation of the Qur'ān, and if he does, which is impossible to eliminate in every case, it is very concise and he quotes only the relevant part of it (without giving its *isnād*), which concerns the matter under discussion. In general, it appears that al-Māturīdī wanted to show by his *ta'wīlāt* that the Qur'ān is not a static and time-frozen message, but rather a current and flowing divine word which is moving in and with time. Perhaps he was the first among the early Sunnites to realize that Muslims must find in the text of the Qur'ān an intellectual guidance that would direct their efforts to solving their contemporary social, political, economic and ideological problems. In short, al-Māturīdī saw human reason not only able to receive the Qur'ān, but also to positively respond to its message.

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[85] On this point see, J. Schacht, "New Sources for the History of Muḥammadan Theology", *Studia Islamica*, I, 1953.

[86] The edition was made under the sponsorship of al-Majlis al-'A'lā li Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyyah, Cairo.

[87] Cf. *Ta'wīlāt*

[88] *Ibid*, pp. 28–29.

In addition to the *Ta'wīlāt* and with regard to his contribution to Qur'ānic studies, al-Māturīdī wrote a small treatise: *Risālah fī mā yajūzu al-waqfu 'alaihi fī al-Qur'ān* in which he states that there are fifty two places in the Qur'ān where, if one intentionally makes a stop while reading, he will turn to be an infidel.[90] According to M. Rahman, this work is available in six different libraries.[91] The work, however, is not relevent to our study here since it deals only with a technical aspect (*Tajwīd*) of the Qur'ān.

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[89] For more on al-Māturīdī's concept of *ta'wīl* see, Götz "Māturīdī und sein Kitāb Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān" pp. 27–70; John Wansbrough, *Qur'ānic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, (Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 121, 150, 154.

[90] See, Rahman, p. 44.

Although al-Māturīdī's contribution to the field of exegesis was original and important, his place there is not well recognized compared to other authors in the field. This is probably because of his unusual emphasis, at least for his time, on a rational approach to the interpretation of the Qur'ān and his overwhelming concern with theological issues in his *ta'wīlāt* . Having made this last point, we are now ready to enter the realm of al-Māturīdī's theology.

c) *Theology*

It is in the field of theology that the most significant performance of al-Māturīdī must be recognized. It was here that he found the truly fertile soil for maturing the fruits of:

> ... (the) views of the "middle-of-the-road" majority (*Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah*), with certain latitude towards the right and the left, that, thanks to the activity of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth, crystallized the "orthodox" point of view and led, during the fourth century — at the hands of al-Ash'arī and **al-Māturīdī** (our emphasis) — to the formulation of the orthodox creed and theology.[92]

But before the realization of this project of the "middle-of-the-road" form of Islamic theology, al-Māturīdī had to direct his energy, as we have already indicated, in two directions. First, he had to make sure that the dividing wall between Islam, on the one hand, and the outside world of atheism (*Dahriyyah*), polytheism (*Shirk*), dualism (*Thanawiyyah*) and any other form of quasi-monotheism which might come from the *Ahl al-Kitāb*, on the other, was firm and well secured; and, second, he had to perform the chore, which was far more difficult than this first task above, of restoring the Islamic doctrine after the erosion which was started by an inundation of groundless tradition and was spread by an arrogance of pretentious rationalism. While for the former task, he could expect and get some help from his co-religionists, be they theologians or philosophers, the burden of the latter seemed to lie, for the greatest part, on his own shoulders. We are, of course, aware of the role of al-Ash'arī in this process as well as that of al-Ṭaḥāwī. But we are equally conscious of the stroke Islamic doctrine suffered at the former's hands from whose side-effects Islam has still hardly recovered, and of the latter's dogmatic-declarative approach which yielded little room for new possibilities in Islamic theology. Al-Māturīdi, in contrast, had a much more natural doctrinal growth and so a rather steady and open theological mind. He suffered from no theological, spiritual complex. It is in this process of the freeing of the Islamic doctrine from the unnecessary sediments of traditionalism and the over-reaching expectations of rationalism and, in due course, of the making of a synthesis between these two extremes, tradition and reason, that al-Māturīdī has shown the aptitude of his mind, the originality of his intellectual character and the uniqueness of his contribution to Islamic theological thought.

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[91] *Ibid.*

[92] Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, (Karachi, 1965), p. 141.

The following reported titles of the works relative to al-Māturīdī's overall theological activity will well display how deeply he was involved in removing the erosive elements invading the body of the Islamic creed which were coming from both poles of tradition and reason:

(1) Kitāb Bayān Wahm al-Mu'tazilah
(2) Kitāb al-Radd 'Alā al-Qarāmiṭah
(3) Kitāb Radd Awā'il al-Adillah li al-Ka'bī
(4) Kitāb Radd Tahdhīb al-Jadal li al-Ka'bī
(5) Radd Kitāb al-Imāmah li Ba'ḍ al-Rawāfiḍ
(6) Radd al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah li Abī Muḥammad al-Bāhilī
(7) Radd Wa'īd al-Fussāq li al-Ka'bī[93]

Unfortunately, none of these works has reached us in any shape or form. But from their titles we can see that al-Māturīdī was not satisfied with the traditional authoritarian imamism of Shi'ism, nor with the ultra-liberal rationalism of Mu'tazilism. Therefore, he thought, there must be something in between these two poles which will reveal the full truth of the nature of the Islamic creed. About all of this, we may rest assured, al-Māturīdī will have to tell us extensively in his outstanding book: *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* which is also his *Summa Theologia.* That gives us a kind of compensation for the loss of the above works and permits us to move ahead in our consideration of his theology.

But before going further, it is worth mentioning here that another book, titled *Kitāb al-Maqālāt,* was ascribed to al-Māturīdī as well. According to Brockelmann, a manuscript copy of it is preserved in Köprülü Library (No. 856) but which Tanci found to be a mistake because there is another copy of the same work in Fatih Library (No. 2894) which has no reference to al-Māturīdī, and which, further, was designed only to expound the teaching of al-Ash'arī's school.[94] While Tanci was not able to identify the exact author of that, Ayyub 'Alī, after his research, has come to the conclusion that the author of the above mentioned book: *al-Maqālāt,* which is attributed to al-Māturīdī, might be Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Fūrak al-Iṣfahānī (d. 406) who was a leading figure of the Ash'arite school in his time. His conclusion is based on a ms. found in the library of 'Arif Ḥikmat in Madīna (No. 232 *Tawḥīd*), the title page of which states that the book originated from the dictation of al-Shaikh al-Imām Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Mubārak to Abū 'Abdullah al-Mubārak b.

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93 M. Rahman mentions three more books: *Kitāb Radd Wa'īd al-Fussāq* which is, I think, the same as No. (7), and *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā Uṣūl al-Qarāmiṭah* and *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā Furū' al-Qarāmiṭah,* which are the same as No, (2). See, Rahman, p. 46; Ayyub Ali, however, mentions only these seven titles. See, Ali, p. 273.

94 Tanci, *op. cit.* p. 8, n. 5.

Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusain b. Aḥmad. The date of this ms. is as early as 446/1054.[95] But given the fact that all the reports on al-Māturīdī's writings unmistakenly list this book to be among his works,[96] and in view of his knowledge of and interest in the religious comparative studies which we find in his *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*,[97] it is difficult not to believe that he did actually write such a book. We therefore consider it an open possibility that one day it may be discovered, and, if so, this would make al-Māturīdī among the earliest Muslim scholars who engaged themselves in the genre of literature on the religious comparative studies and would give him the right to join the company of other famous men in this field, such as, al-Ash'arī, al-Baghdādī, al-Shahrastānī, Ibn Ḥazm, al-Isfarā'inī and others.[98] But even before that happens, any serious study of the genesis and development of Islamic theology cannot ignore any more al-Māturīdī's contribution to this area because his theological *magnum opus, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* is at our disposal now, and because of its date, magnitude, and the kind of information which it provides for us on that heresiography.

Besides the above mentioned titles, there are also three other theological works which are attributed to al-Māturīdī, namely, (1) *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar,*[99] (2) *Sharḥ al-Ibānah 'an Uṣūl al-Diyānah,*[100] and (3) *al-'Aqīdah.* The first of them, viz., *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar,* al-Kawtharī found to belong to Abū al-Laith al-Samarqandī. *Al-Sharḥ,* al-Kawtharī said, "transmits from many who are later in time than al-Māturīdī. And, indeed, it factually belongs to Abū al-Laith al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983) because several manuscripts of it are available in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, which carry an explicit indication that it is a work of Abū al-Laith al-Samarqandī."[101] As for the second, it seems that Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Raziq is the only one who attributed to al-Māturīdī a *Sharḥ* of al-Ash'arī's *al-Ibānah 'an Uṣūl al-Diyānah.*[102] But, as Ayyub 'Alī has explained,[103] it is unlikely that al-Māturīdī had written such a book because he and al-Ash'arī were contemporaries, both highly esteemed at the time in *Kalām*, but both differed from each other on some major issues and al-Ash'arī even charged Abū Ḥanīfah with having once adopted the view of the creation of the Qur'ān.[104] Besides, there is not the slightest indication in *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* that al-Māturīdī was even aware of al-Ash'arī's *Kalām* and his *Kalām* works.[105]

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[95] Ali, p. 288, n. 2.

[96] Cf. *Fawā'id,* p. 195; *Jawāhir,* pp. 130–31; Murtaḍā, p. 5; *Tāj,* p. 5; GAL, vol. i,p. 209; GAL (S), vol. i, p. 346; GAS, vol. i, pp. 604–6; Tanci, p. 8.

[97] See, *Tawḥīd;* G. Vajda, "Le Témoignage d'al-Māturīdī sur la Doctrine des Manichéens, des Dayṣānites et des Marcionites", *Arabia,* XII, 1966, pp. 1–38

[98] For more on the Muslim activity in this area see, H. Ritter, "Muhammedanische Häresiographen", *Der Islam,* 1920, pp. 24–59.

[99] Cf, *Rasā'il.*

And finally,[106] a small treatise called *al-'Aqīdah* was attributed to al-Māturīdī by Ḥajjī Khalīfah,[107] al-Bayāḍī [108] and Brockelmann.[109] In fact, this work is better known as: *al-Saif al-Mashhūr fī 'Aqīdat Abī Manṣūr*, a ms. of which is available in the 'Ārif Ḥikmat Library, in Madīna, which was made by Taqy al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370).[110] Apart from the fact that none of the *Ṭabaqāt* sources on al-Māturīdī's

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[100] Mustafa 'Abd al-Rāziq, *Tamhīd li Tārīkh al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 289.

[101] "Muqaddimah",*'Ālim*, p. 4; *Tabṣīr*, on the margin of p. 114.

[102] Cf. *Tamhīd li Tārīkh al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 289.

[103] Cf. Ali, p. 277.

[104] Cf. *Ibānah*, p. 29.

[105] Cf. *Tawḥīd.*

[106] His only Persian work, *Waṣāyā wa Munājāt*, has been already mentioned; cf. p. 5.

[107] *Kashf*, vol. 2, p. 127.

[108] *Ishārāt*, p. 54.

[109] GAL, vol. i, 209; GAL (S), vol. i, 346; Cf. also GAS, vol. i, 605.

[110] Cf. *Ibid.* This work has been edited by Y. Z. Yörükān and published in Ankara Üniversitesi, Ilahiyet Fakultesi Yayınlarımdan, No. 7 (953), Ankara, 1953, In spite of my effort, I was not able to obtain a copy of this work, but later realized that I could get little help from it.

works mentions this work, al-Subkī himself, while dealing with the problem of *Īmān* and *Islām* and upon a statement in the basic text: "The most correct is, indeed, what al-Māturīdī has said (*Inna al-aṣaḥḥa mā qālahu al-Māturīdī*)", cast a doubt on its authenticity, saying: "It is obvious that it (*al-'Aqīdah*) does not belong to al-Māturīdī. My feeling is that it belongs to some of his students."[111] In addition, Ayyūb 'Alī observes that the work deals with some *Kalām* differences between the Ash'arites and the Ḥanafites, namely, concerning the problems of *Ṣifāt al-af'āl* (God's Attributes of Action) and on *Tabdīl al-shaqāwah wa al-sa'ādah* (The Alteration of Human Wretchedness and Blissfulness), whereas we know that this kind of *Kalām* literature was only advanced in the post-al-Māturīdī time.[112] Therefore, it is apparent that this *'Aqīdah* was written by one of al-Māturīdī's later followers, and not by al-Māturīdī himself. It is a sort of a short summary of al-Māturīdī's chief theological work: *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*.[113]

5. *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*

Finally, it is appropriate that we end this discussion of al-Māturīdī's life and works with a close consideration of the heart of his theology, that is, his *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*. For, through it we can feel the intellectual pressure of his time and the impulses of his own theological thought; in it we can see his views on the world outside of Islam , his effort to free Islamic thought from doctrinal mistakes prior to and during his time, and his genuine attempt to establish a synthetic, "orthodox", Islamic theological *Weltanschauung*.

We must begin with a few words about the authenticity of *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* .[114] In fact, we have to answer two basic questions, as Daniel Gimaret put it: first, does the unique text of the Cambridge ms. Add. 3651 surely belong to al-Māturīdī? and second, if it does, is it really that of *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*? On the first question Gimaret's answer is Yes:

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[111] See, Ali, p. 274, who had the ms. at his disposal.

[112] *Ibid*, p. 275.

[113] *Ibid*, p. 276.

[114] J. Schacht has no doubt about that "New Sources for the History of Muḥammadan Theology", nor does Hans Daiber "Zur Erstausbage von al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* ", *Der Islam*, 1975, pp. 299–313. M.

> Sur la première question, la rèponse est oui, sans aucun doute. J'ai en effet relevé quatre passages où Nasafi cite, comme étant de Māturīdī, des propos que l'on retrouve littéralement dans le texte édité par Kholeif (que je désignerai provisoirement par *Kh.*). Ainsi,
>
> *Tabṣirah* 115 b 15–19 = *Kh.* 45, 16–18
> 220 b 13–18 = 47, 6–9
> 354 a 5–10 = 266, 4–11
> 413 a 9–15 = 303, 15–304,1"195

And after further comparison of *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* with the ms. of Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafi's *Tabṣirat al-Adillah*, Gimaret concludes that:

> Nous admettrons néanmoins — provisoirement et par commodité — que le titre du ms. de Cambridge n'est pas usurpé. Nous avons de toute façon la preuve incontestable que ce texte est bien de Māturīdī, et, au fond, cela seul pas ici.[116]

Despite the fact that the significance of the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* cannot be overemphasized in terms of the general development of Islamic theology, the key questions which the work deals with in the early stage of the *Kalām*, the role it played in the advancement of the Muslim orthodox

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Allard, however, thinks that the authenticity of it cannot be categorically asserted (*Attributs* ..., p. 421)

[115] See, Daniel Gimaret, *Théories de l'Acte Humain en Théologie Musulmane*, (Paris, 1980).

[116] *Ibid*, p. 178. I am very grateful to Mr. Gimaret for making my task here a lot easier.

creed, and, finally, of al-Māturīdī's ideas themselves,[117] the book was given neither due respect by the Muslim surveyors of Islamic theology, nor was it always recognized by the very followers of al-Māturīdī and those who benefited from his *Kalām* ideas. Thus, for example, Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990) fails to afford us any trace of al-Māturīdī, while he does not forget either of his two contemporaries, al-Ash'arī[118] and al-Ṭaḥāwī[119] whose merit to the formation of the Sunnite theology is by no means greater than al-Māturīdī's; in fact, as we hope will emerge from the following pages, it is even less. And still worse, his very own follower Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142) in his capital work: *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah* — this work has been for a long time a basic textbook for the theological studies at the University of al-Azhar — refers neither to al-Māturīdī nor to his *K. al-Tawḥīd* .[120] The same goes for the later Bosnian Māturīdite, Kāfī Ḥasan al-Akḥiṣārī (d. 1024/1615), who in the Introduction to his book: *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī Uṣūl al-I'tiqādāt*,[121] while listing his sources, mentions the chief masters of the Ḥanafite-Māturīdite *Kalām* school, such as, Abū Ḥanīfah, al-Ṭāḥāwī, 'Umar al-Nasafī, Muḥammad al-Sanūsī (d. 895/1488), but not al-Māturīdī.[122] And, as though keeping true to the tradition, the modern reformist Egyptian theologian, Muḥammad ʻAbduh (d. 1905), while certainly drawing a tremendous benefit from al-Māturīdī's ideas,[123] does not explicitly admit that in his *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*.

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[117] Cf. J. Schacht, "New Sources ..."; Daiber, "Zur Erstausgabe ..."; Jean Spiro, "La Théologie d'Abou Manṣour al-Māturīdī" in *Verhandlungen des XIII Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses*, Hamburg, September, 1902.

[118] *Fihrist*, pp. 433, 450, 451.

[119] *Ibid*, pp. 506, 512, 513–14.

[120] See, "Muqaddimah", *Tawhīd*, p. 9. n. 4.

[121] See, ms., folio 2.

[122] For more on this Bosnian theologian See, L. V. Thalloczy, "Eine Denkschrift des Bosnischen Mohammedaners Molla Hassanalkafi, über die Art und Weise des Regierens", *Archiv für slawische Philologi*, XXXII, 1911; Karel Petraček, "Die Chronologie des Werke von Hasan al-Kiafi Akhisari (1544–1616)", *Archiv Orientalni*, vol. 27, No. 4, 1973, pp. 407–12; Mr Omer Nakićević, *Hasan Kafija Pruščak pionir arapsko-islamske nauke u Bosni i Hercegovini* (*Hasan Kafija Pruščak : A Pioneer of the Arab-Islamic Learning in Bosnia and Hercegovina*),

In our opinion there are four main reasons why al-Māturīdī was neglected and his *K.Tawḥīd* not duly noticed by some major Muslim historians, biographers, and heresiographers, and why he was relatively inferior in popularity to al-Ash'arī among the Sunnites.[124] The first reason is al-Māturīdī's Arabic, which is abstruse and full of irregularities of grammar and sentence structure.[125] This has been even explicitly stated by one of the most sophisticated Māturīdites of the fifth/eleventh century, Abū al-Yusr Muḥammad al-Bazdawī (d. 1099/492), who says:

وكتاب التوحيد وكتاب التاويلات
من خلق في الشيخ الامام (چس ق) ابو المنصور
الماتريدي رحمه الله الا أن في كتاب
التوحيد الذي صنفه الشيخ ابومنصور
قليل انغلاق وتطويل وفي ترتيبه
نوع تعسير لولا ذلك لا كتفينا به

(Sarajevo, 1977); Amir Ljubović; and Fehim Nametak, *Hasan Kafija Pruščak: Izabrani spisi*, (Selected Scripts), (Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1983).

[123] Cf. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1st published in 1962), pp. 142, 149.

[124] Al-Ṭaḥāwī, the third representative of theological Sunnism, was kept out of this Ash'arī-Māturīdī competition chiefly because of his being a Ḥanafite as well as his being more inclined to the traditional way in theology. Cf. Ayyub Ali, "Ṭaḥāwīsm" in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1963), vol. i, pp. 244–258.

[125] "Lanque ..., souvent incorrecte: manifestment, Māturīdī savait mal l'arabe." See, Gimaret, p. 178. For more on al-Māturīdī's harsh style see, "Autour de la Théorie de la Connaissance chez Saadia" in *Revue des Études Juives*, CXXVI, avril-septembre, 1967, fascicule 2–3, pp. 174–189; Cf. also English "Introduction", *Tawḥīd*, pp. xiv– xv.

(*Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* and *Kitāb al-Ta'wīlāt* are suitable to belong to *al-Shaikh al-Imām Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī,* may God have mercy on him, and had it not been for little obscurity, prolixity in it as well as some difficulty in its arrangement, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* , which al-*Shaikh Abū Manṣūr* himself had composed, would have been sufficient to us)."[126] Al-Bazdawī is right. Apart from the fact that the text of the ms. has no punctuation, an ommission which is common to all classical Arab writers, and about which F. Kholeif rightly complains and which he tries to correct when possible,[127] the obscurity of *K. Tawḥīd* comes from al-Māturīdī's long sentences which are full of prepositions which are equivocal and remote from the subject;[128] while both the prolixity and the difficulty in the arrangement of the book are due to the frequent repetition and mixture of the subject-matter al-Māturīdī is dealing with, which lead us to the hypothesis that his composition of *K. Tawḥīd* was not continuous but occasional. In addition to that, al-Māturīdī has brought into his *K. Tawḥīd* many unresolved philosophical knots as well, which he tried to solve. But by doing so, he made his own difficult theological knots more tangled, which certainly had not attracted the simple-minded traditionalist nor the easy-going rationalist outside of the Mu'tazilite camp.

The second reason is the simplification of al-Māturīdī's ideas by his later followers, which is also related to the first . Thus, neither the Bosnian Pruščak in the 16th century, nor Muḥammad 'Abduh in the 19th, saw the need to read *K. Tawḥīd* because they had al-Māturīdī's teachings in 'Umar al-Nasafī's *al-'Aqā'id* ,[129] as well as an extensive commentary on it by al-Taftāzānī (d.792/1390),[130] nor did they feel obligated to refer to him, and why should they, since al-Nasafī himself had not done so. Likewise, why should a student of al-Azhar today be bothered by the search for and the reading of *K.Tawḥīd,* since he has the book of *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah* which is short, simple, more indoctrinational than educational and so much easier to memorize and handle.[131]

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[126] See, Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī, *Kitāb 'Uṣūl al-Dīn* (*The Principles of Religion*), (ed. by Dr Hans Peter Linss, Cairo, 1963), p. 3.

[127] See, "Introduction", *Tawḥīd,* pp. xiv - xv.

[128] See, e.g., *Tawḥīd,* p. 87, where al-Māturīdī, while discussing non-existence (*al-ma'dūm*) with the Mu'tazilites, says in the middle of the sentence: كان العالم معنى منه اليه به كان , which speaks for itself and its obscurity.

The third reason is the reduction of al-Māturīdī's *Kalām* considerations to a narrow frame of the comparative Ash'arite-Māturīdite studies. This pattern of the Sunnite theological writing became popular as the result of the formation of the theology of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā'ah* (the middle-road majority),[132] and because the chief actors in that process and achievement were al-Ash'arī and al-Māturīdī, their respective followers confronted their ideas and worked out their agreements and differences. Thus al-Subkī, an Ash'arite, composed *al-Qaṣīdah al-Nūniyya*[133] for that purpose, Abū 'Udhbah, a Māturīdite, wrote *al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah fīmā bayna al-Ashā'irah wa al-Māturīdiyya,* and Shaikh Zada, also a Māturīdite, wrote *Kitāb Naẓm al-Farā'id wa Jam' al-Fawā'id.*[134] Their purpose was to show that al-

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[129] See its English translation by D. Macdonald, "The Faith of Islam" in *Hebraica,* pp. 95–117. To this it should be added: Abū al-Qāsim Isḥāq, al-Ḥākim al-Samarqandī's, *al-Sawād al-A'ẓam* (see, Rahman, pp. 35–36) and Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī's *Tabṣirat al-Adillah,* ms., Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, No. 42 *Tawḥīd* (see also, Tanci "Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī").

[130] See, Mas'ūd b. 'Umar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah fi Uṣūl al-Dīn wa 'Ilm al-Kalām,* (ed. by. K. Salāmah, Dimashq, 1974).

[131] "The *'Aqā'id* of one of his (al-Māturīdī's) followers, al-Nasafi, fortified with the commentary of al-Taftāzānī, an Ash'arite, is the theological text-book of the last two years of the Azhar course and is a final authority in Egypt." (see SEI, art "al-Māturīdī").

[132] See, F. Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History.*

[133] See, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā al-Shāfi'iyyah.*

[134] See, *Rawḍah*; *Naẓm*; Cf. also *Ishārāt*; Murtaḍā; Jean Spiro, "La Théologie d'Abou Manṣoûr al-Māturīdī."

Ash'arī and al-Māturīdī worked in tandem for the orthodox theology, but , at the same time, that they had differences in opinion just like those concerning *Fiqh* issues. Thus al-Ash'arī became the favorite of the Shāfi'ites and al-Māturīdī of the Ḥanafites. Not only that, but the geographical territory was also divided according to these two schools: the majority of the Ash'arites being in Khurāsān, Iraq, and Shām, while the main concentration of the Māturīdites was in Transoxiana.[135] This activity, while being in a way helpful to the spread of Māturīdism, in due course, by containing only the enumeration of certain simplified differences between these two theologians, such as, the problems of *istithnā', takwīn* and the like,[136] became the purpose in itself, which effectively diverted al-Māturīdī's theology from its original moorings.

And the final reason, which helps to explain al-Māturīdī's lesser stature when compared to al-Ash'arī, lies in the fact that al-Ash'arī had no real need to justify the supremacy of his religion (*Dīn*) over Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism or any other religious form at the time; but rather he had to prove his doctrinal freedom from the unpopular labels of Jahmism, Jabrism, Qadarism, Anthropomorphism, as well as Mu'tazilism as it was itself going through a crisis and falling into the pit of an unofficial *Bid'ah* and to find the way by which to verify his intellectual loyalty to the true and orthodox Islam. This is because the Muslim empire, especially its central part, Baṣra and Baghdād, had in the 3rd–4th century of the Hijrah reached a climax in its political, economic and cultural development, which, as a consequence, provided the Muslim scholars with a physical as well as mental state of self-sufficiency.[137] Thus al-Ash'arī could concentrate on the theological questions which were raised within the Muslim realm without necessarily paying attention to the outside challenges which, though being worth of consideration, had not posed great threat to Islam. But to achieve his goal of purification of Islamic theological thought, al-Ash'arī had to have solid ground on which to build his new theology and sufficient reason to justify its validity. And he did find the solid traditional ground[138] in the authority of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal by way of which he was able to verify his orthodox theological stance;[139] being equipped with the Mu'tazilite rational skills he found the way to rationalize his method in *Kalām*;[140] by the claim of his mystical vision he supported his conversion from pure rationalism to orthodoxy;[141] and because of the controversies of the Muslim heretics he found the reason to restore the Islamic orthodox creed;[142] Al-Ash'arī gave the name to his theology the views of *Ahl al-Ḥaq wa al-Sunnah* (the People of Truth and the Middle Path).[143] Thus, al-Ash'arī was neither a pure traditionalist nor a legitimate rationalist, but he included both in his approach.[144] All this, doubtless, attracted the simple-minded Muslim masses and left room for those more reason-oriented to safely exercise their intellect. His case was then further vindicated by Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176)[145] and elaborated by the giants of Islamic theology, such as, al-

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[135] Cf. Murtaḍā, vol. i, p. 6.

[136] Cf. Fathallah Kholeif, *A Study on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and his Controversies in Transoxiana*, (Beyrouth, 1966).

[137] For more on the tendency of the Muslim cultural self-sufficiency see,

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Hodgson, "The Islamic Vision and Religion and Civilization" in *The Venture of Islam*, vol. i, pp. 71–99.

[138] On the *Ḥadīth* activity at the time see, F. Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*.

[139] Cf., *Ibānah*, p. 9.

[140] Cf., *Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*

[141] Cf. *Tabyīn*.

[142] Unlike al-Māturīdī, al-Ash'arī in his *Maqālāt* dealt only with the Muslim heresies. Cf. *Maqālāt*.

[143] Cf. *Ibānah*, p. 8.

[144] For more on al-Ash'arī's traditional and rational faces see, G. Maqdisī, "Ash'arī and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History" in *Studia Islamica*, XVII, pp. 37 - 80; XVII, pp. 20–39.

[145] Cf., *Tabyīn*.

Baqillānī (d. 403/1013), al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), al-Juwainī (d. 478/1085), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), and al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209).

As for al-Māturīdī, apart from being at the border of the Muslim empire where the non-Islamic religions were still to be counted and dealt with,[146] (a fact which assumed a more inclusive approach to the "heretics" of Islam,[147]) and apart from his quiet and impersonal theological pursuit, he did not have recourse to any mystical or visional guidance, the way al-Ash'arī did, and, in fact, he laid no claim to be defining the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, i.e., the orthodox Islam. Thus we have no mention at all of this term nor of that concept in his *K. al-Tawhīd* . In fact, one basic question is now how al-Māturīdī was involved in the business of Sunnism in the first place? In our opinion, the answer might lie in the fact that the theology of al-Ash'arī, because of its double face, on the one hand, and its ambiguity as to the real role of reason, on the other, could not satisfy the expectations of all the 'middle-of-the road' Muslim theologians, especially those who had the input of Abū Ḥanīfah's free judgement approach to the religious issues.[148] It is, then, in al-Māturīdī's explicitness of the significance of reason and the magnitude of its role in creating an Islamic orthodox theology which put him both in the front line of that doctrinal pursuit and second in that front only to al-Ash'arī.

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[146] Cf. Alphonse Mingana, *The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East: A New Document*, reprint from "The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library" , vol. 9. No. 2, July, 1925.

[147] Al-Māturīdī is not only more moderate in his dealing with the Mu'tazilites, though he is very critical of some of their ideas and is on occasion very harsh on some other theological groups, but he seeks their help when he can get it in combatting the non-Islamic ideas. See, e.g., *Tawḥīd* , p. 123.

[148] We will elaborate more on this point in the course of our study. In fact, we see this as the most crucial point in an overall estimation of al-Māturīdī's contribution to the Islamic theological thought which has the label of the Sunnite line.

This was not only the case with the classical approach to al-Māturīdī and his ideas. Modern scholarship has followed the same pattern in the historical survey and in the evaluation of the Islamic orthodox theology.[149] The treatment of his theological thought has been almost always marginal and has been dealt with only in general and introductory works.[150] There is only one monograph,[151] that of Ayyub Ali which we are extensively using here,[152] devoted to the theology of al-Māturīdī. Even the two exceptional studies of Manfred Götz and M. M. Rahman are only attempts to attract attention to the significance of al-Māturīdī and his works and to a lack of a thorough understanding of his theology, rather than being satisfactory and elaborate treatments of the latter.[153] Although Jean Spiro had already in 1902 drawn attention to the importance of al-Māturīdī and his works, it was J. Schacht , among the earliest western scholars, who in his article of 1952, fully realized the unique importance of al-Māturīdī and his *K. Tawḥīd* in terms of both the genesis and development of Islamic theology. His promise to edit *K. al-Tawḥīd*, however, was never fulfilled. It was only in 1970 that Fathallah Kholeif from Egypt had enough courage and knowledge to undertake the edition of *K. Tawḥīd* which is now at our disposal and which is the principal object of the present study. In assessing this first edition of such an important theological work, Hans Daiber says:

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[149] See, M. Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, Edinburgh, 1962.

[150] Cf. Abū Zahrah; I. Goldziher; Tritton; Gardet-Anawati; M. Fakhry.

[151] I am glad to say here that just as I have finished this chapter, I was kindly informed by the librarian Faez Mossad that a book on al-Māturīdī's theology, *Imām Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī wa Ārā'uhu al-Kalāmiyyah*, was published (Maktabah Wahbah, Cairo, 1985) which represents the doctoral dissertation made by Dr. 'Alī 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Maghribī at the Azhar University, Department for Adab. The book is very informative and extensive (479 pages). The author was able to use several manuscripts relative to al-Māturīdī's *Kalām*; he often compares al-Māturīdī's thought to other Islamic theological trends and to Islamic philosophy as well, so much so that sometimes, I would say, those comparisons are unjustifiable. I benefited a lot from this work, although it did not change my basic conclusions on al-Māturīdī and his theological thought.

[152] See, Ali.

[153] Compare that, e.g., with the studies on al-Ash'arī, Wilhelm Spitta, *Zur Geschichte Abu' l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī's*, Leipzig, 1876; Martin Schreiner, *Geschichte des Ash'aritenthums*, Leiden, 1981; M. A. Mehren, "Exposé de la réforme de l'Islamisme commencée au troisième siècle de l'Higire par Abou-l-Hasan Ali el-Ash'arī et continuée par son école", *Third National Congress of Orientalists*, vol. ii.

> Mit Kholeifs Edition von al-Māturīdīs *Kitab al-Tawḥīd* ist zum ersten Mal die Möglichkeit gegeben, al-Māturīdīs Theologie und den ideengeschichtlichen Hintergrund genau zu studieren. Die Wichtigkeit dieses Textes kann nicht genug unterstrichen werden. Der Herausgeben des Textes konnte sich nur auf eine einzige Hs. stützen, auf ein Unikum in der Cambridge University Library (Add. 3651). Die undatierte Hs. ist jüngeren Datum des 15. Šabān 1150 (= 8. Dez. 1737). Ein altes, 500/1106 geschriebenes Examplar hat noch der 1025/1616 verstorbene bosnische Gelehrte Kāfi Ḥasan Efendī al-Āqḥiṣārī gekannt; einer Vorbemerkung zu seinem Werk *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fi uṣūl al-i'tiqādāt* zufolge habe er es in Makka gefunden und die Absicht geäussert, darüber ein Kompendium zur Widenlegung der ketzerischen Neuerer, speziell der Sufis zu schrieben.[154]

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[154] See, Hans Daiber, "Zur Erstausgabe von al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*", pp. 202–203. I possess a copy of the ms. of al-Ākḥiṣārī's *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* … which is available at the Gazi Husrevbeg Library in Sarajevo, and registered in *Katalog arapskih, turskih and perziskih rukopisa*, Sarajevo, 1963, vol. i, p. 484, No. 722. In the Introduction of this ms. we do not find such a remark to which H. Daiber is referring and which he has found in a ms. in Berlin (cf. his note 22). In fact, as we have indicated earlier, al-Ākḥiṣārī does not include the name of al-Māturīdī in his list of the Ḥanafite names whose works were his sources for his book. If we really have that remark of al-Ākḥiṣārī, our conclusion about the role of *K. Tawḥīd* in al-Ākḥiṣārī's *Rawḍāt* must be revised. But as it now stands, we believe that this Bosnian theologian neglected *K. Tawḥīd*.

H. Daiber's revision of the edition is helpful, but it does not diminish the pioneering effort of the editor who has displayed both the patience in his work and the capability of handling the task. Certain imperfections of the edition are objectively excusable, but some others are, maybe, subjectively made. Since the edition is based on the unique copy of the Cambridge ms., it is hard to say that it is the final version of *K. Tawḥīd* . However, for the time being, we have to be satisfied with this copy and its edition, and, probably, will never be able to discover another one.

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As we can see, al-Māturīdī has authored 19 works: four in the field of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, none of which is extant; two in the area of *Tafsīr*, both of which are extant in manuscripts and one of which, *Ta'wīlāt*, is partially edited; twelve in the field of *Kalām*, seven of which are non-extant, one, *Maqālāt*, is not yet fully identified, one, *K. Tawḥīd*, is extant in ms. and fully edited, while three are wrongly ascribed to him; and finally, al-Māturīdī wrote one book in Persian which is extant in ms.[155]

In addition to *K. Tawḥīd*, which is the basic source of our study, as we have already stated, we will use only the edited portion of *Ta'wīlāt*, for, in order to go over the whole ms. of this work, we would need far more time than is now available to us. In addition, we will consult the works of the chief followers of al-Māturīdī, such as, Abū al-Qāsim al-Samarqandī (d. 340/951), al-Bazdawī (d. 492/1099), 'Umar al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142), al-Ṣābūnī (d. 580/1184), Ibn al-Humām (d. 861/1457) and others, as well as those on the Ash'arī-Māturīdī comparative studies, especially those of al-

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[155] According to M. M. Rahman, two manuscripts of this work are available, one in Istanbul [Fatih, MS No. 5426, ff. 235a–240a.] and the other in Bursa [H. Çelebi, MS No. 1187/8, ff. 112b–117a.] See, Rahman, p. 81.

Bayāḍī (d. 1083/1672), Shaikh Zādah (his work was published in 1317/1899), Abū 'Udhbah (his work was published in 1322/1904), and al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1891).

In what has been said so far, I think, we have laid a solid ground upon which we can proceed to build the edifice of al-Māturīdī's theological thought and to examine more closely its essential foundations. We will do that, first, by introducing his method, then by expounding his basic ideas about the world, God and man, and finally by assessing his influence on the course of Muslim theology in general and on Sunnism in particular.

Chapter Two

Al-Māturīdī's Method in Kalām

1. *A Vindication of Kalām (Islamic Theology)*

Had al-Māturīdī wanted, he could have invoked the authority of the masters of the Ḥanafite school to justify the validity, usefulness — indeed, the necessity of the science of *Kalām.* For the founder of the Ḥanafite school, Abū Ḥanīfah, was the first among the early "orthodox" Muslim jurists who engaged in *Kalām.* "The first theologians among them (the Sunnites), from the jurists and the founders of the *madhhabs* (واول متكلميهم من الفقهاء وارباب المذاهب...)," said al-Baghdādī, "were Abū Ḥanīfah and al-Shāfi'ī.[156] Abū Ḥanīfah wrote a book refuting the Qadarites which he called *al-Fiqh al-Akbar.* He also dictated a treatise in defense of the view of the *Ahl al-Sunnah* that the ability to act is simultaneous with action,[157] although he added that "it is valid for two opposite ways which is also the view of some of our people."[158] In fact, Abū Ḥanīfah first tried his mind in *Kalām* before he entirely devoted himself to the pursuit of *Fiqh*. "In the beginning", said Qubaiṣah b. 'Uqbah, "Abū Ḥanīfah, was disputing with the heretics so much so that he became a master of that and distinguished in it. Then he abandoned the dispute (*jidāl*) and returned to *Fiqh* and *Sunnah* wherein he became an *Imām* (master) as well"[159]

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[156] Al-Shāfi'ī wrote two books: *Taṣḥīḥ al-Nubuwwah* (*The Validation of Prophecy*) and *al-Radd 'alā al-Barāhimah* (*The Refutation of Brahmanism*). See, *Uṣūl,* p. 308. But it has been reported that he said: "If people knew the heretic tendencies *Kalām* contains, they would flee from it as they do from a lion. It is better for a man to meet Allah with any sin save *Shirk* than to meet Him with something of *Kalām,*" (see, *Ishārāt,* p. 36), a remark which certainly did not contribute to his fame among Muslim theologians. He did, however, engage in a discussion with a notorious Ḥanafite at the time, Bishr al-Mirīsī (d. 230 H.). As for the other two jurists, Mālik b. Anas and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, we know that the former refused the pursuit of *Kalām,* who, in fact, was the first to anounce the principle of *bilā kaif* (non-commital approach to God's essence and attributes), but he was not as agressive in condemning the science of *Kalām* as the latter. Usually, the Sunnites justify their pursuit of *Kalām* on the authority of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib who combatted the Khārijites and the Qadarites, as well as on the example of the 'Umayyid caliph, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and Ḥasan al-Baṣri, both of whom wrote books refuting the Qadarites. Cf. Macdonald, p. 147; 'Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār, *Nash'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī al-Islāmī,* (Cairo, 1977), vol. I, pp. 243–251; *Ibid, 'Aqā'id al-Salaf,*(Cairo, 1971).

Al-Māturīdī could have also braced himself with the pro-*Kalām* attitude by the example of Abū Ḥanīfah's immediate pupils, such as Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanīfah (d. 172 h.), Muḥammad b. al-Shaibānī (d. 189 h.), al-Ḥasan b. Ziyād al-Lu'lu'ī (d. 204 h.), and Bishr b. Ghayyāth al-Mirīsī (d. 218 h.), all of whom left books on *Kalām*.[160] Thus, Ibn al-Nadīm reports that al-Yamān b. Ribāb, a Khārijite, who probably lived in the early period of Islam,[161] wrote a book: *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanīfah* (*Refutation of Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanīfah*),[162] which indicates that Ḥammād had been active in *Kalām* discussion.

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[157] This is contrary to what the Mu'tazilites believe, that the capacity to act exists prior to an actual act.

[158] See, *Uṣūl*, p. 307.

[159] See, *Manāqib*, vol. 1, p. 59.

[160] As for Abū Yūsuf, who served three 'Abbāsid caliphs, al-Mahdī, al-Hādī, and al-Rashīd, and was the first to be called "*Qāḍī al-Quḍāt*" ("Judge of the Judges") [see, *Fihrist*, vil. i, pp. 502–3; vol. ii, p. 1129], we are told that Abū Ḥanīfah issued a warning to him that he should not engage himself in *Kalām* dispute, especially in front of common people, a *waṣiyyah* (testament) which he complied with and passed it on to others (cf., al-Makkī's *Manāqib*, vol. ii, p. 115). But this does not mean that he was out of the *Kalām* field. From a statement of Zaid al-'Umarī which says: "Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf, Muḥammad, Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanīfah, and Zufar were disputing people with *Kalām*, and they all were *Imāms* (masters) in *'Ilm* (knowledge)" (cf. al-Bazāzī's *Manāqib*, vol. ii, p. 212), we can see that both he and Zufar were not totally passive toward the *Kalām* issues.

[161] Cf. *Fihrist*, vol. ii, p. 1126.

[162] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 452.

As for al-Shaibānī, we are told that he wrote a book, *al-'Aqā'id al-Shaibāniyyah,* which is in a poetic form (*Qaṣīdah Alfiyyah),* and upon which many commentaries were made. One of these commentaries was made by 'Alwān b. 'Aṭiyyah al-Ḥamawī al-Shāfi'ī (d. 936 H.) which he called "*Badī' al-Ma'ānī fī Sharḥ 'Aqā'id al-Shaibānī.*"[163] But because this book is only reported by Ḥajjī Khalīfah, and because all of its other commentators are Shāfi'ites, Ayyub Ali cast doubt on its authenticity.[164] We think, however, that the case of this work might be the same as that of other works of this nature, e.g., Abū Ḥanīfah's.[165] It is most probable, then, that this work is a collection of al-Shaibānī's sayings which was compiled by some later author (in this case Sunnite, and not necessarily Ḥanafite), which represents his *Kalām* views. What we want to say here, though, is the fact that al-Shaibānī had participated in *Kalām* problems.

Concerning the other two, i.e., al-Ḥasan b. Ziyād al-Lu'lu'ī and Bishr b. Ghayyāth al-Mirīsī, it is reported that the former wrote two books on *Kalām, Ma'ānī al-Īmān* (*Meaning of Faith)*[166] and *Kitāb al-Maqālāt*;[167] and about the latter we are told that he in his early age attained to companionship with Abū Ḥanīfah and that after Abū Ḥanīfah's death he clung to Abū Yūsuf. As a matter of fact, due to al-Mirīsī's active involvement in *Kalām,* his name was attached as an eponym to a special school of *Kalām, al-Mirīsiyyah;* and due to his strange views on some issues of the time, such as his statement that faith is only a matter of heart, that the Qur'ān is created,[168] etc., he was accused of Murji'ism; and because of these and other of his opinions, al-

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[163] Cf. *Kashf,* vol. ii, pp. 16–17.

[164] See, Ali, p. 235, no. 1.

[165] Cf. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed,* pp. 122–24.

[166] See, *Fihrist,* p. 506.

[167] See, *Tāj,* p. 22.

[168] For a reaction to al-Mirīsī's views see, 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-Dārimī, *Radd al-Imān al-Dārimī 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd 'alā Bishr al-'Anīd,* ed. by Muḥammad al-Faqqī, Miṣr, 1358 H.

Ash‘arī,[169] al-Baghdādī[170] and Isfarā’inī[171] made him equal in notoriousness with Ibn al-Rīwandī (d. 245 H.)[172]

Finally, al-Māturīdī could have gotten some help from the later followers (*Aṣḥāb)* of Abū Ḥanīfah to back up his occupation with *Kalām*. The names of four of those followers are especially conspicuous: .(1) Ḥafṣ al-Fard (death date unknown), (2) Ismā‘īl b. Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanīfah (d. 212 H.), (3) Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī (d. 238 H.), and (4) Muḥammad b. Shujjā‘ al-Thaljī (d. 268 H.). All of these Ḥanafites had an active role in the *Kalām* discussion.[173]

Interestingly enough, al-Māturīdī entirely disregarded this traditional conformity and chose to take upon himself the responsibility to find his own way for the vindication of the science of *Kalām*. Not only did he bypass the authority of the masters of the Ḥanafite school, he also did not feel the need to write any apology for the pursuit of *Kalām*, nor did any later Māturīdite theologian feel such an obligation. His contemporary colleague, al-Ash‘arī, however, could not enjoy this luxury. Due to his previous Mu‘tazilite career, he apparently could not cross the threshold of *Kalām*, and at the same time be regarded as orthodox, without both having someone to guard his back, for which he chose Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal,[174] and without writing an apology which would spell out his traditional loyalty and theological honesty,[175] and some of his later followers had to do the same.[176]

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[169] Cf. *Maqālāt*, vol. i, pp. 222–23.

[170] Cf. *Farq*, p. 193.

[171] Cf. *Tabṣīr*, p. 61.

[172] Abū al Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Rīwandī (the spelling is that of al-A‘sam, see below) was first a Mu‘tazilite and then turned to the Rafiḍite view. It is interesting that al-Māturīdī does not mention at all al-Mirīsī in his *K. Tawḥīd*, while he devotes almost ten pages in disputing al-Rīwandī's view. I am sure that al-Māturīdī was aware of al-Mirīsī and his *Kalām* because of the fact that both of them were Ḥanafites. For more on al-Rīwandī see, A. A. al-A‘sam, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Rīwandī al-Mulḥid (History of Ibn al-Rīwandī, the Heretic)*, (Beirut, 1975).

[173] For more on the Ḥanafite theologians after Abū Ḥanīfah and prior to al-Māturīdī see, Ali, pp. 233–259.

[174] Cf. *Ibānah*.

a) *Via 'Aql to True Faith*

Obviously, the question arises here as to what was the basis on which al-Māturīdī pursued this quite independent course of *Kalām*?[177] Not surprisingly, it is in the very opening lines of his *K. Tawḥīd* that we find the answer to this question. Before telling us anything else, al-Māturīdī saw it appropriate to explain that blind following (*taqlīd)* in religion cannot justify true faith:

> Al-Shaikh Abū Manṣūr, may Allah have mercy on him, said: furthermore, we find that all people, with all their different religious opinions and sects, agree on one statement, namely, that whatever one holds to be true, is valid, and, consequently, that whatever others than him hold, is invalid. (This comes from the fact) that they all agree that each one of them has his own predecessors (*Salaf*) whom he follows. Therefore, it is taken for granted that blind following (*taqlīd*) excuses its embracer from holding the opposite view on the same question. This, however, only accounts for the multiplicity of number (i.e., a number of his concerned predecessors). The only way out of this is if one of them has his ultimate argument based on Reason by way of which his truth can be known and if he has a demonstrative proof by way of which he can persuade the fair-minded people to accept his truth. Therefore, the one whose source of religion compels the realization of his view, is right, and thereupon, each one of them ought to learn

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[175] Cf. *Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*

[176] Cf. *Tabyīn* and *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah*

[177] It should be noted that al-Māturīdī does not use *Kalām* nor *'Ilm al-Kalām* in the sense of Islamic theology we know, a field of Islamic knowledge we know now. Instead, he interchangeably uses the terms, such as *Naẓar, Fikr, Baḥth* and the like.

> the truth which the former finds in his religion. This is because of the fact that his genuine arguments and the testimony to his truth will have overwhelmed them. For, the ultimate arguments, if one overcomes everyone else with them, compel each one of them to submit to him. This is obvious as I have mentioned; and it is not permissible that there appear opposing views in religion on the same question. This is because conflicting arguments do not win the other's adherence, but only extracts doubts in him.[178]

It is, then, on this very principle, namely, that *taqlīd* (blind following of one's tradition) cannot be a criterion for an ultimate religious truth, that al-Māturīdī thought it useless to attach his arguments to any existing theological tradition, even if that be the tradition of his own school master, Abū Ḥanīfah. Cannot one say, however, that al-Māturīdī has gone too far from the Sunnite to the Mu'tazilite territory of argumentation? Certainly, one can get that impression if one does not allow al-Māturīdī to further modify this argument as a part of the whole structure of his theory of knowledge. We will allow him to modify this later on when we come to discuss his treatment of the roots and means of religious knowledge.

It is worthwhile noting here that the idea of *taqlīd* as traditional conformism opposed to the method of *ijtihād*, independent thinking, had been well worked out by early Muslim jurists for the purposes of *Fiqh*. It is, therefore, quite clear in matters of Islamic religious ritual and other laws.[179] In Islamic theology, however, we do not have such a clear-cut distinction of the concept of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*. Of course, we find there the reasons why *taqlīd* is or is not acceptable in matters of faith, but we do not have clear and workable guide-lines which would, on the one hand, promote *ijtihād* and, on the other, control the disproportionate spread of *taqlīd*. Here, I think, we can realize the necessity that the principles of *Fiqh* come to a close, or one may even say, inseparable relationship with the principles of *Kalām*. Perhaps, al-Māturīdī was the first person among the Sunnites to closely come to this realization, and may be the only one to offer some workable guidance for that. For, al-Ash'arī could hardly be a model for the solution of either the *ijtihād* or the *taqlīd* problem in Islamic theology. This is because his employment of reason, on the one hand, and his explicit reliance on the tradition of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, on the other, can provide anything but the possibility for the right answer to this problem. The same goes for his later follower al-Baghdādī who, while denouncing *taqlīd* in faith (*Īmān*) as such,[180] proclaims the strict Sunnite creed, failure to follow which excludes one from being regarded as a Sunnite, i.e., an orthodox Muslim, a statement which practically entails the idea of pure *taqlīd*.[181] It seems though that Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456 H.) and al-Ghazālī have come with a much better understanding of *taqlīd* and its implications. Both of them regard *taqlīd* in itself as an invalid basis for faith, but further explain that it has two dimensions, one which is legitimate because it comes from God and the Prophet, and the other which is illegitimate because it comes from man.[182] This is the same as al-Māturīdī's saying that both Tradition (*Sam'*) and Reason (*'Aql*) are genuine roots of religion, meaning that there is no way that we can know which religion is true without a divine guidance, but, at the same time, that there is nothing in the divine message that Reason cannot comprehend. Thus al-Māturīdī explains:

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[178] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 3–4.

[179] See, al-Shafi'ī; F. Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*.

> If one says: "if it is permissible that God command to man that which he does not understand by his reason,

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[180] *Uṣūl*, pp. 254–55.

[181] *Farq*, p. 10.

[182] See, *Fiṣal*, pp. 25–44; *Iḥyā'*, vol. i, pp. 78–79.

> why is it not permissible, then, that He speak to him that which he does not understand either." It is to be said to him: there is no difference between these two, and, so, it is not right to treat them the way you have mentioned; there is nothing that God would command to man unless He caused his reason to understand it, and likewise, there is nothing that God would speak to man unless He also caused the way through which he can understand that. Therefore, if man is short of understanding of the bearing of the command, he is excused from it. However, the principal ways to that (understanding) are different; the kinds of these ways are known through speculative thinking (*Naẓar*) and intellectual exercise (*Fikr*).[183]

Here again we recognize that *de facto* voice of Mu'tazilism in al-Māturīdī's theological thought. It is sometimes so clear and loud that it interferes with the set-up of his orthodox tone. This should not surprise us though, because he does not suffer from al-Ash'arī's Mu'tazilite stigma on his back. Al-Māturīdī is not afraid of listening to the Mu'tazilite theological composition, nor does he mind tuning up some of his rational points to its useful and productive notes. In fact, this is, in our opinion, what makes al-Māturīdī to be the best candidate for a real synthetic model of Islamic orthodox theology. For, al-Māturīdī's primary aim is to establish a give-take relationship between Scripture and Reason which would hopefully rescue Islamic theology from both the obscurantism of the traditionalists, and the ultra-rationalism of the Mu'tazilites. Al-Māturīdī's Reason is not an ostrich in the sand of Tradition, nor a lion in the wild realm of Reason; Reason must be first tamed by Scripture before it can be allowed to produce on its own; and it must never lose sight of the purpose of the revelation. But, at the same time, we must have enough confidence in Reason to let it perform its task. This trend of al-Māturīdī's thought will be more evident as we go along with our study and its most conspicuous point will be seen as he attempts to work out a rational Islamic ethics.

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[183] *Tawḥīd*, p. 137.

As one can see al-Māturīdī's basic argument for the pursuit of *Kalām* is rational. It is different from Abū Ḥanīfah's argument of the priority of faith over practice, "*Fiqh* (insight) in religion," says Abū Ḥanīfah, "is better than *fiqh* in laws (*aḥkām*),"[184] as well as from his argument about his contemporary religious problems. Thus asked by his student Abū Muqātil about the assertion of some that one ought not to venture where the Companions of the Prophet did not venture, that is, *Kalām*, Abū Ḥanīfah answered: "To do what the Companions did would be sufficient if we were in their position, but we are confronted by enemies who attack us and declare shedding our blood lawful; therefore we must know who is right and who is wrong."[185] (This argument al-Bazdawī used in his *Uṣūl*, see, p. 4). Most probably al-Māturīdī thought that both of these arguments were self-evident and so needed no further justification. On the other hand, his rational justification of *Kalām* is similar to that of al-Baghdādī, and other later Ash'arite as well as Māturīdite theologians.[186]

In conclusion, there were four main approaches to the pursuit of *Kalām* which had been developed by the time of al-Māturīdī: (1) the first generation non-committal approach to *Kalām* ; (2) that of the Mu'tazilites, who thought it obligatory; (3) that of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and the Hanbalites, who were against it;[187] and (4) that of al-Māturīdī and al-

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[184] "al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ", *'Ālim*, p. 40. This argument Kafi Pruščak used in his *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, see, ms., fol. 1.

[185] See, J. Schacht, "An Early Murci'ite Treatise: The Kitāb al-'Ālim wal-Muta'allim", *Oriens*, 1964, p. 104. Cf. al-Ash'arī's answer to this challenge, *Istiḥsān*.

[186] Cf. *Uṣūl*.

[187] See, Ibn Qudāmah (d. 620/1223), *Taḥrīm al-Naẓar fi Kutub Ahl al-Kalām*, (ed. and trans. into English by George Makdisī, London, 1962).

Ash'arī, who considered it necessary but not obligatory,[188] an approach which became prevalent in the subsequent generations. Thus we have:

1st generation	non-commital
Mu'tazilites	*Kalām* = obligatory
Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal	contra-*Kalām*
al-Māturīdī & al-Ash'arī	necessary, but not obligatory

b) *Via Naẓar to Rational Ethics*

As we have already indicated, the core of al-Māturīdī's vindication of *Kalām* lies in the necessity of a rational Islamic ethics. In fact, the advancement of rational Islamic ethics must be regarded as one of the most vital contributions of al-Māturīdī to the structure of the Islamic orthodox theology as a whole, something which al-Ash'arī failed to provide.[189] Thus, after stating the charges of the anti-Kalamists, for example, that *Naẓar* is just an impairment (*'aṭab*), that it is self-contradictory, that it instigates unnecessary hypothetical judgements in matters of faith, and that it may deflect man from God's commands and warnings to the dictation of Satan, al-Māturīdī reacts to these charges by arguing that:

> The necessity (*luzūm*) of *Naẓar* is not a consequent (*'aqīb*) to a preceding *naẓar*, but is consequent to that where the *Naẓar* and *Baḥth* initially occur, that is, to

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[188] Cf. *Erkenntnislehre*, p. 27. J. Ess considers the Sufis also as the contra-Kalamists. I think that this is too strong a statement on them because in the beginning they had an undecided attitude toward *Kalām*, and because of the fact that Sufism through al-Ghazālī became a part of *Kalām* debate, and through the *Ishrāq* (Illuminism) of Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. ca. 680/1281) it got its own structure and logic. For more on Islamic Illuminism see, Henri Corbin, *Sohrawardi d'Alep, fondateur de la doctrine illuminative* (*ishrāqī*) (Paris, 1939).

[189] For more on rational and traditional aspects of Islamic Ethics, see G. Hourani, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*.

> Reason through which we know good (*maḥāsin*) and bad (*masāwi'*) things ... There are three possibilities for a thoughtful speculator: either (1) his speculation will lead him to the knowledge of his being created and to see that he has a Creator who will reward him for his good and punish him for his bad deeds which, in consequence, will inspire him to avoid that which angers Him and adopt that which pleases Him; or (2) it will lead him to deny all that has been mentioned and indulge himself in all kinds of pleasure. As for the consequence of that {it awaits him in the hereafter}; or (3) it will lead him to the realization of the incomprehensibility of knowledge and its reality which inspired him to search, but, then, his heart will rest and the pain will disappear which afflicts him when he tries to think. After all, if he is fair-minded in his thinking, he will know that his *naẓar* is a gain to him in all of its aspects.[190]

And if one says, challenging al-Māturīdī's assertion that there is nothing that God commands unless He causes Reason to comprehend, that if the apology of a slave who says to his master: 'if I had known that my action would anger you, I would have avoided it', is not acceptable to the master, why should not God's wisdom work the same way? Upon which al-Māturīdī responds.:

> That is all right in the relationship among us because of the lack of the sign (*dalīl*) by way of which one may know the command. But as for God, exalted be He, He has given man a sign by way of which he can know the command, and He has stirred his mind to thought and reminded him of the various kinds of consequences (of his actions). (So if he commits sins), that will be only because of his abandoning the pursuit of *Naẓar*, and

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[190] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 135–36.

> that is his own act (*fi'l*), i.e., fault. Therefore, he will be argued against on the Day of Judgement by the very thing he could be excused from. This is a result of his own act, (fault).[191]

From the foregoing presentation and the specimens of *K. Tawḥīd* one can clearly see al-Māturīdī's rational argument for *Kalām* and his ethical proof of it. The traditional element of his theology, as an unavoidable condition for any serious Islamic orthodox theology, will be shown in and corroborated by systematic treatment of al-Māturīdī's theory of knowledge. As a matter of fact, having convinced us of the existence of and the need for the field of Islamic theology, al-Māturīdī is ready to tell us about the basic tools for successful work in it and to teach us how to use them as we go along with him on his theological labor.

2. *Theory of Knowledge*

Al-Māturīdī was the first Sunnite *Mutakallim* who made a serious attempt to work out an original systematic theory of Islamic theological knowledge; and was, perhaps, one of the most influential of all the early *Mutakallims* in determining the subsequent theological course in this regard. Both the date and the substance of his *K. Tawḥīd* are undeniable evidence to that assertion.[192]

In addition to that, Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddimah* as a follow-up to the science of *Fiqh* under the subtitle: *jadal* (dialectics), states that there are two ways of knowing the rules (*qawā'id*) of the boundaries (*ḥudūd*) and correct method (*ādāb*) of reasoning (*istidlāl*) which one aimed either at proving an opinion or disproving it, or, whether that reasoning concerns *Fiqh* issues or otherwise, i.e., *Kalām*. One way is that of al-Bazdawī, which is based on the textual proofs of Revelation (*al-Adillah al-Shar'iyyah*), consensus (*Ijmā'*), and reasoning (*Istidlāl*), and the other is that of al-Āmidī,[193] which is based on proofs for any possible source of knowledge.[194] Ibn Khaldūn, however, does not tell us exactly who is this al-Bazdawī, but we have good reasons to believe that he is Fakhr al-Islām Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Bazdawī (d. 482/1089), the elder brother of the famous Māturīdite *Mutakallim*, Ṣadr al-Islām al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1099). For this Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī, who was himself a Ḥanafite-Māturīdite in *Fiqh* and *Kalām*, wrote *Kitāb Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, a commentary on which (*Kashf al-Asrār 'an Uṣūl Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī*) was written by 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Abd al-'Azīz Aḥmad al-Bukhārī (d. 830/ 1425);[195] and, furthermore, in this commentary we can easily see the impact of al-Māturīdī's thought. If we leave out the *Ijmā'*, which is in any case far more emphasized in matters of *Fiqh* than in *Kalām*, al-Bazdawī's pattern of *al-Adillah al-Shar'iyyah* (the textual proofs of Revelation) and *al-Istidlāl* (reasoning) is identical with al-Māturīdī's *Sam'-'Aql* theological pattern which he introduced in his *K. Tawḥīd*, as we shall soon see; and knowing the fact that al-Bazdawī is one of the faithful followers of al-Māturīdī, it is not difficult to discern how he has come to this idea.

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[191] *Ibid*, p. 137.

[192] Due to the scanty information we have about the early Mu'tazilites, their contribution to this area is not fully clear.

It is, therefore, very hard to explain how a scholar of Ibn Khaldūn's caliber could fail to connect al-Bazdawī's theological scheme to that of al-Māturīdī, and then to discern from it that the new synthetic method of Islamic theology — as opposed to the previous traditional one of the traditionists and the rational ones of the Mu'tazilites — was most probably born in al-Māturīdī's thought; and that the antique, less Aristotelian method — as opposed to the modern, more Aristotelian theological way introduced by al-Ghazālī — was produced by al-Māturīdī, and developed and passed on to others by his later followers. If this assertion of ours seems to some to be an overstatement, we may soften it by saying that, if al-Māturīdī alone cannot take the credit for the genesis of the Sunnite Islamic theology and his followers for its development, al-Ash'arī and his followers cannot either. Ibn Khaldūn and many other Muslim surveyors, however, want us to believe that al-Ash'arī and the Ash'arites alone deserve that honor. Thus, Ibn Khaldūn tells us that thanks to al-Ash'arī the synthesis between *Naql* and *'Aql* was found, and thanks to his followers, al-Bāqillānī (d. 403 h.) and al-Juwainī (d. 478 h.), the antique theological method was formed;[196] and he does not even mention the name of al-Māturīdī, nor does he in any manner ever allude to his existence and that of his theology.

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[193] This is very likely the famous Mutakallim Saif al-Dīn al-Āmidī, although in the original text it is with "ع" al-'Āmidi; Cf. *Muqaddimah*, 433.

[194] *Ibid.* It is interesting that F. Rosenthal has left this portion out of his translation. Cf. *The Muqaddimah*, p. 348.

[195] See, *Kashf al-Asrār 'an Uṣūl Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī*, 4 vols., Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabī, Beyrouth, 1974.

While Ibn Khaldūn's overlooking of al-Māturīdī's contribution is probably excusable because of his adoption of Ash'arism and because of the geographical distance between the two, we can find little excuse for Ibrahim Madkour — one of the leading modern Muslim scholars in the area — who takes over the above assertions of Ibn Khaldūn without any analytic and critical approach. Therefore, we cannot accept his statement that: "... nous croyons avoir suffisamment démontré qu' Ach'ârî est le vrai initiateur de cette méthode (i.e. rational)."[197] However, in a relatively recent article,[198] Madkour has modified his approach toward both al-Māturīdī and the Māturīdites. Thus, after a routine presentation of the role of al-Ash'arī and the Ash'arites in introducing Aristotelian logic into Islamic theology (*ca.* three pages), Madkour states:

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[196] See, *Muqaddimah,* pp. 440–41.

[197] See, *L'Organon d'Aristote dans le monde arabe,* (Paris, 1934), p. 256.

[198] "La logique d'Aristote chez les Mutakallimūn" *Islamic Philosophical Theology,* (ed. Perviz Morewedge, New York, 1979), pp. 58–68.

> Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (+944) vient de paraître, il s'appelle *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd.* Dans ce livre, Māturīdī esquisse quelques lignes concernant les sources de notre connaissance et les différentes sortes d'arguments que nous employons. Dans son exposé, il emploie quelques termes philosophiques et logiques, par example, la quiddité, l'essence, la substance et l'accident. Ses grands successeurs, comme Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī (+1114) dont les écrits théologiques sont encore manuscrits et Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (+1142), auteur d'al-'Aqā'id adoptent la même dialectique que les Ash'arites et se servent beaucoup de la logique aristotélicienne.[199]

So considering the fact that Madkour has not even mentioned al-Māturīdī nor the Māturīdites in his previous major work (1934) on the impact of the Aristotelian logic on Islamic theology, his above statement is a big improvement towards the recognition of al-Māturīdī and his contribution to Islamic theological thought. But the real appreciation of al-Māturīdī has a long way to go.

Finally, we must say a few words about Wensinck's handling of this subject. First of all we must say that his *Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Development* [200] is, no doubt, one of the best works on Islamic theology written by a western scholar. We must give him due credit for his thorough elaboration on the early stage of Islamic theology, especially for that part of it which concerns the theological heritage of Abū Ḥanīfah. However, his treatment of the theory of knowledge of the early Muslim theologians in that work is not satisfactory.[201] Our complaint about it is that Wensinck has not only left a wide open gap between Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767) and the Māturīdite follower 'Umar al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142), but also that he could not see any possible relation between the latter's theory of knowledge and al-Māturīdī. Instead he jumped over al-Māturīdī to al-Baghdādī (d. 429 H.), an Ash'arite, and concluded that the latter was the first to lay down the foundation for an epistemology of Islamic theology. This failure of Wensinck to take al-Māturīdi into consideration was probably due to the fact that al-Māturīdī's *K. Tawḥīd* was not available to western scholarship at the time he wrote his book (1932). (The same may be said about I. Goldziher, Tritton, and Gardet-Anawati, none of whom have referred in any way to al-Māturīdī's theory).[202] This lack of data about al-Māturīdī's original thought might also be the reason why Wensinck is somewhat cautious about making a definite conclusion as to the earliest attempt of the Muslim theologians to work out a theory of knowledge when he states: "... to our knowledge al-Baghdādī was the first to give an exposition of the roots of knowledge which was taken over by his successors"[203] But after a further discussion Wensinck has come up with a different explanation of this point by saying that: "We have seen that in al-Baghdādī's work the theory is still *in statu nascendi*, just as is the doctrine of the roots of law in al-Shafi'ī's *Risāla*."[204]

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[199] *Ibid*, p. 63.

[200] London, 1932.

[201] Cf. *Muslim Creed*, pp. 246–275.

However, thanks to the discovery and publication of al-Māturīdī's *K. Tawḥīd*, we are now in a position to take a direct look at al-Māturīdī's theory of theological knowledge and thus to correct the shortcomings of the previous studies and their conclusions about the origin and development of Islamic theology in this regard. We hope to show by our study that, if both Muslim and western scholars, classical and modern, owe to al-Māturīdī an apology for failing to notice his genuine contribution to the genesis and development of Islamic theology, it is to be offered especially for their constant oversight of his theory of knowledge.[205] In fact, al-Māturīdī was the first *Mutakallim* who introduced the most comprehensive definition, roots and means of knowledge into Islamic theology which have well served the traditio-rational pattern of later orthodox theological speculation. I do not intend, by any means, to diminish al-Ash'arī's contribution in this area, but I want to stress the fact that his theory of knowledge is not as clear and comprehensive as al-Māturīdī's and that the former does not deserve all the credit for the final shaping of orthodox Islamic theology, which so far has been attributed to him as well as to his followers. On the contrary, as we hope to demonstrate, a lot of that credit should go to al-Māturīdī and the later Māturīdites.

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[202] Cf. Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law* (1910); Tritton, *Muslim Theology* (1947); Gardet-Anawati, IMT (1948).

[203] *Muslim Creed*, p. 251.

[204] *Ibid*, p. 255.

a) *Definition of Knowledge*

Al-Māturīdī and his followers use two terms for cognition: *'Ilm* and *Ma'rifah* which, according to al-Maghribī[206] and al-Taftāzānī, are synonyms. Thus, explaining Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī's statement that inspiration (*ilhām*) cannot be regarded as valid means for obtaining the *Ma'rifah* (cognition) of the truth of a thing, al-Taftāzānī says: "It would be more appropriate if he said 'means for obtaining the *'Ilm* about thing', but apparently he (al-Nasafī) wanted to emphasize on our meaning that *'Ilm* and *Ma'rifah* have the same meaning, and not as some have specifically reserved *'Ilm* for the compounds or the universals and *Ma'rifah* for the simples or the particulars."[207] As we know, al-Nasafī was a Māturīdite.

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[205] An exception from this is G. Vajda who, by his article,"Autour de la Théorie de la connaissance chez Saadia" *Revue des études juives*, 1967, pp. 135–187 and in the following issue pp. 375–395, was, to our knowledge, the first to give an exposition of al-Māturīdī's theory of knowledge and to compare it to his two contemporaries, one Jewish, Saadia [Sa'dyah al-Fayyūmī] (d. 942), and the other Muslim philosopher, al-Fārābī, as well as to 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415 H.), a latter Mu'tazilite.

[206] See, al-Maghribī, p. 36.

[207] See, *Sharḥ*, p. 24.

Neither in al-Māturīdī's *Ta'wīlāt* nor in his *K. Tawḥīd* do we find an explicit statement defining knowledge. But his followers, such as, Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī,[208] 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Bukhārī (d. 730 h.)[209] and al-Bayāḍī (1083 H.)[210] have explicitly ascribed to al-Māturīdī this definition of knowledge: "بانه صفة يتجلى بها المذكور لمن قامت هى به" ("[knowledge] is a quality by means of which the thing concerned manifests itself to a person [the knower] in whom it [the quality] subsists").[211] And this is how al-Bayāḍī elaborates on this definition:

> That is to say, it (knowledge) is a quality by means of which that which is mentioned manifests itself and is being noticed by that quality to which (that mentioned) is bound concerning the humans, the angels and the Jins. He (al-Māturīdī) has preferred the word *madhkūr* (mentioned) to the *shay'* (thing) in order to encompass the existent (*al-mawjūd*), the nonexistent (*al-ma'dūm*), the possible (*al-mumkin*), and the impossible (*al-mustaḥīl*). Hence, this includes also the intelligibles of the senses and those of the reason pertaining to the concepts (*taṣawwurāt*), the certain propositions (*al-taṣdīqāt al-yaqīniyyah*) and others, as well as the compound (*murakkab*), the singular (*mufrad*), and the conviction of the right follower; and it excludes opinion (*ẓann*), doubt (*shakk*), imagination (*wahm*) and ignorance (*jahl*). Therefore, it is said that (this definition) is the best definition.[212]

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[208] See, *Tabṣirat al-Adillah* as cited by al-Maghribī; Cf. al-Maghribī, p. 26, n. 1.

[209] *Kashf al-Asrār*, vol. i, p. 7.

[210] Cf. *Ishārāt*, p. 39.

[211] Al-Taftāzānī also verbatim mentions this definition without, however, referring it to al-Māturīdī. See, *Sharḥ*, p. 12. Therefore, al-Māturīdī might have started this definition in one of his other non-extant works, or it has originated by some of his later followers which was adopted by all the later Mu'tazilites.

[212] See, *Ishārāt*, p. 39.

Those familiar with Islamic theology can without much difficulty realize the close similarity between the above definition of knowledge of al-Māturīdī and that of the Ash'arite theologian, al-Bāqillānī (d. 403 H.) who lived less than a century later, followed also by al-Juwainī (d. 478 H.),[213] who defines knowledge as: “ انه معرفة المعلوم على ما هوبه ” (“it is the cognition of the known as it is”);[214] and also they will easily notice that al-Bayāḍī's interpretation of it implies the logical elements of *al-ṭarīqah al-ḥadīthah* (the modern method) in Islamic theology which was introduced by al-Ghazālī (d. 505 H.) and taken over by al-Shahrastānī (d. 548 H.), al-Rāzī (d. 606 H.), al-Bayḍāwī (d. 688 H.), al-Ījī (d. 756 H.), al-Taftāzānī (d. 791) and others.[215]

The definition which has been ascribed to al-Ash'arī, on the other hand, can hardly be incorporated into the structure of either the antique or the modern method of rational orthodox theology. Thus al-Bayāḍī reports that al-Ash'arī has defined knowledge as :“ بانه الذى يوجب كون من قام به عالما ” (“That which makes the person in whom it subsists necessarily knowing”).[216] First, this definition obviously is circular since the *definiendum* (*'ilm*) is assumed in the definition (*ālim*).[217] Secondly, we can see that the point here is the knowledge of the knowing subject rather than the way to the knowledge of the object as it appears to be in al-Māturīdī's definition. This knowing-subject concept of knowledge comes from the fact of al-Ash'arī's overwhelming pre-occupation with the proof of the existence of God's attribute of knowledge which is based on the premise that God is living (*Ḥayy*),[218] and which is directed against the *ta'ṭīl* (disassociating God from any attributes) of the Jahmites and the Mu'tazilites. Therefore, al-Ash'arī's definition, having that narrow focus, could not satisfy either al-Bāqillānī or al-Juwainī, and was completely ignored by al-Taftāzānī, also an Asha'rite.[219]

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[213] See, *Irshād*, p. 12.

[214] See, *Tamhīd*, p. 6.

[215] For more on this method see, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 433–442; See, al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād fī al-I'tiqād* ; al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*; al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal*; al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāli' al-Anwār*; al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*; al-Taftāzānī, *Maqāṣid* ; Cf. IMT, pp. 153–169.

[216] See *Ishārāt*, p. 39; J. Ess translates it in this way: ["(Wissen) ist, was den, der es besitzt, notwendigerweise wissend macht"], cf. *Erkenntnislehre*, p. 80; *Irshād*, p. 12.

[217] I am thankful to Prof. Fazlur Rahman for making this significant point.

As for the Mu'tazilite definition of knowledge, three of the most conspicuous persons who have attempted to formulate one, are al-Ka'bī (d. *ca.* 319/931), Abū 'Alī b. al-Jubbā'ī (d. 303/915) and Abū Hāshim b. al-Jubbā'ī (d. 321/933). Allowing some slight differences in their formulation of the definition, they all seem to have agreed that knowledge is conviction (*i'tiqād*) about which the heart or the soul is fully certain. But only later was a fuller elaboration of the Mu'tazilite theory of knowledge, also based on the above notion of conviction, made by 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 416/ 1025).[220]

As may be seen from the foregoing presentation, al-Māturīdī seems to be the most eligible candidate for the title of the first known person who started the process of the Sunnite theological epistemology that eventually produced the Islamic synthetic theology. The very fact that al-Māturīdī has not occupied himself with the detailed division of knowledge, a task which he has apparently left to subsequent generations to perform, leads us to believe that his focus was rather centered around the roots and means of it. That is to say, it is al-Māturīdī, and not al-Baghdādī (*pace* Wensinck), who 'was the the first to give an exposition of the roots of knowledge which was taken over by his (and al-

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[218] Cf. R. McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ash'arī*, p. 9; trans., pp. 12–13.

[219] Cf. *Tamhīd*, *Irshād*, and *Sharḥ*.

[220] For the definitions of al-Ka'bī and Abū Hāshim as well as a Sunnite criticism of them, see *Uṣūl*, p. 5; Cf. also G. Vajda, *op. cit.* 135–174; For more on 'Abd al-Jabbār's see, *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa al-'Adl*, (various editors, 16 vols., Cairo, 1380–1389/ 1960–1969); *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah*, (ed. by 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān, Cairo, 1384/1965); M. Peters, *God's Created Speech*, (Leiden, 1976).

Ash'arī's) successors', and it is in al-Māturīdī's, and not in al-Baghdādī's (*pace* Wensinck again), work that 'the theory is still *in statu nascendi,* just as is the doctrine of the roots of law in al-Shāfi'ī's *Risālah.*'[221] And knowing the fact that al-Māturīdī had a thorough training in *Fiqh,* it should not surprise us that he sought to find an epistemological parallel to it for *Kalām.* It is, then, on the basis of this premise that we shall proceed to the next stage of our elaboration of al-Māturīdī's method in *Kalām.*

b) *Roots of Knowledge*

We could not agree with G. Vajda more when he said: "... al-Māturīdī does not study the problem of knowledge for itself but inasmuch as it is a prerequisite to a demonstration of religious truth."[222] This assertion points to a basic distinction between al-Māturīdī's thought and ultra-rational Mu'tazilism. In fact, according to al-Māturīdī there is only one knowldge, i.e., religious. This is because of the fact that:

> Creatures must have a religion on which they agree and a source in which they must take refuge.[223]

Hence, as we can see, religion to al-Māturīdī has a politico-social and moral-ethical function rather than a mere personal or mystical relation to a transcendental being. Both of these goals, the political and the ethical, are possible only through rational thinking whose purpose is not fulfilled in itself, but rather for the benefit of the above objectives. This religious knowledge is based on two roots: (1) *Sam'* (Tradition) and (2) *'Aql* (Reason).

As is well known, *Fiqh* (Islamic Law) is based on four roots: (1) the *Qur'ān* (Scripture), (2) the *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition), (3) *Ijmāʻ* (consensus) and (4) *Qiyās* (analogy). The first two roots are based on the notion of divine knowledge and guidance, while the other two presuppose human reasoning and judgement. Parallel to these two types of roots are the *Samʻ* and *ʻAql* in *Kalām* (Islamic theology). The former covers both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, and the latter denotes human reasoning and judgement. This terminology has been generally accepted and has become an universal pattern in Muslim religious literature. As for *Fiqh*, we know that this terminology was formed by al-Shāfiʻī, while al-Māturīdī may be regarded, as far as we can see, as the first one who worked that out for *Kalām*. It is interesting to note here that the terms Qur'ān and *Sunnah* are never used as the roots of *Kalām*, but always implied by the term *Samʻ* and other synonymous terms, such as, *Sharʻ*, *Naql*, *Khabar* and the like; and that the term *ʻAql* is never used as a root of *Fiqh*, but always implied by the term *Ra'y* which includes both *Ijmāʻ* and *Qiyās*.

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[221] *Muslim Creed,* p. 255.

[222] "... al-Māturīdī n'étude pas le problème de la connaissance pour lui-même mains tant que préalable a' une démonstration de la vraie religion." See, *op. cit.,* p. 174.

[223] *Tawḥīd,* p. 4.

(1) *al-Samʻ*

What does *Samʻ* mean as a root of religious, theological knowledge? Literally the word means listening, audition, hearing, and sense of hearing; and technically it denotes, according to al-Māturīdī, the principle of traditional knowledge which even:

> the sceptics and agnostics share, let alone those people who admit the real existence of things. [224]

And on the basis of this very principle:

> the earthly kings conducted their policy, solved their worldly affairs as long as they wanted to rest their affairs on it and to unify the hearts of their people. Similar is the case of those who claimed prophethood and wisdom

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[224] *Ibid.*

> as well as those who worked with different kinds of arts.[225]

It is, then, through audition that we learn about politics, revelation, and practical arts. But before going any further, it is necessary that we make a distinction between al-Māturīdī's *Sam'* as a general principle of traditional knowledge and his *Khabar* as a particular example of this principle. That is to say, *Sam'* as a root of knowledge denotes the idea of the possibility of knowledge which we receive through our mere hearing and not through our senses or reason. Thus, in principle, we acquire our genealogical knowledge, knowledge about remote historical events, geography, some aspects of medicine, and about foodstuffs, by way of hearing about them rather than sensing them or reasoning about them, at least in the beginning. However, this category of knowledge in its initial stage is neither true nor false. Its truth or falsehood is to be determined through the rules of the science of *Khabar*, i.e., hermeneutics. So, if knowledge, which we receive on the basis of *Sam'* (audition), is submitted to us through an overwhelming and uninterrupted chain of trustworthy transmitters, i.e., if that transmission is *al-khabar al-mutawātir*, it ultimately becomes as necessary knowledge; but if it does not have this level of certainty, it is not necessary until either of the other two channels of knowledge, i.e., sensual and rational, determine its validity. It is, then, on this principle of *Sam'* as a necessary source of knowledge, and on this basis of the trustworthy transmission of the *Khabar* of the *Sam'*, that the *Akhbār* (reports) of the Prophets are regarded and accepted as the highest degree of truth which al-Māturīdī explains in this way:

> Therefore, if the acceptance of the *Akhbār* (reports) is necessitated by virtue of Reason, it follows that the

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[225] *Ibid.*

> acceptance of the reports of the Prophets is also necessary. In fact, there is no *Khabar* which is more obvious in its truthfulness than their *Khabar*. In addition to that, the truthfulness of their reports is supported by the clear (miraculous) signs.[226]

Apparently, al-Māturīdī's insistence on *Sam'* as a necessary root of knowledge is directed against the Summanīya "who deny the value of all knowledge, except that which is supplied by the senses,"[227] and against the Brahmans, "who reject historical knowledge in general."[228] On the other hand, his emphasis on the truthfulness of *al-khabar al-mutawātir* comes as a response to al-Naẓẓām (d. 231 H.), a Mu'tazilite, who had refused to accept that on the ground that there is no guarantee for the Community not to fall in an error, a view which is in contradiction to the well known *Ḥadīth* which says that: "My community will not agree in an error."[229]

The importance of the above distinction between *Sam'* as a general root (*Aṣl*) of knowledge and the *Khabar* as its specific channel (*sabab*) lies in the fact that it enables us to distinguish, on the one hand, the historic reports from those of the revelation and the Prophet's personal ones, and on the other, it provides us with a clearer understanding of the value of general reports in terms of their relation to Reason which al-Taftāzānī explains in this way: "We find that knowledge about the fact that 'one is equal to two halves' is stronger than the knowledge of the existence of Alexandria."[230] Thus, for example, not having hearkened to this distinction, both Ayyub Ali and al-Maghrībī have come with a vague understanding of al-Māturīdī's

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[226] *Ibid*, p. 8.
[227] See, *Muslim Creed*, p. 256.
[228] *Ibid*; *Uṣūl*, p. 11.
[229] *Ibid*.
[230] See, *Sharḥ*, p. 17.

Sam'. Neither of them makes a critical approach to historic reports in terms of their being only a possibly necessary and not absolutely necessary source of knowledge, a distinction, which if they had made, would have led them to the separation of the historic reports from both the Scripture as the absolutely true divine report and the reliable traditions of the Prophet. Thus, neither does Ayyub Ali's statement that: "These (reports) are of two kinds, historical reports (*al khabar al-mutawātir*) and the reports of the prophets (*khabar al-rasūl*), possessing sure signs to prove their honesty,"[231] give the desirable understanding of al-Māturīdī's *Sam'* as a root of knowledge; nor does al-Maghribī's assertion that *al-khabar al-mutawātir* is general information about remote cities, past empires and so on.[232]

From what has been said it follows that *Sam'*, according to al-Māturīdī, is the necessary root of knowledge in as much as it concerns both the divine reports, (the Scripture or the Qur'ān), and the reliable reports from and about the Prophet; it is, however, only possibly necessary inasmuch as it concerns both historic reports and the alleged prophetic reports which do not have the degree of reliability of the *mutawātir* reports. The former category is an absolute source of religious knowledge, while the latter must be subjected to the channels of both the sensual and rational investigation, and upon the determination of their compatibility with either the senses or Reason, they are also to be regarded as necessary. Therefore, we consider al-Māturīdī's *Sam'* to be the general root of theological knowledge, and *Khabar* to be its means. About the latter we will talk in more detail later.

(2) *al-'Aql*

Al-Māturīdī's second principal root of knowledge is Reason; and here are the arguments for its validity:

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[231] See, "Maturidism", *op. cit.*, p. 263. Cf. also Ali.
[232] al-Maghribī, p. 51.

(1) The teleological argument:

> It is reason which tells us that the bringing of the world into existence for the mere purpose of destruction (*fanā'*) is not wisdom. This is because for a rational being to act unwisely is a bad thing. Therefore, it is impossible that the world, of which reason is a part, should be established without any wisdom or should be made without a purpose. When this is established (by virtue of Reason), it proves that the creation of the world is meant for persistence (*baqā'*) and not for annihilation (*fanā'*).[233]

(2) The argument from nature:

> (It is reason through which we see) that the world is in its origin made up of divergent natures and contradictory aspects and whose particular purpose is based on the rational point of view which combines that which is (naturally) combined and divides that which (naturally) deserves to be divided. And this is what the philosophers called microcosm (micro-cosmos).[234]

(3) The psychological argument:

> Man has different desires, divergent natures and those passions that are inlaid in him for the most part. So if men were left alone to their natures, they would come into conflict with each other and fight for their (selfish) benefits and other kinds of honor, nobility, political power and domination, which would only result in mutual hatred and fight, and therein lies mutual destruction and corruption which, if the world were left to it, the entire wisdom behind bringing it into existence would be nullified.[235]

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[233] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 4–5.
[234] *Ibid*, p. 5.
[235] *Ibid.*

(4) The existential argument:

> Men and animals cannot last except through food and that which sustains their bodily life to a certain span of time determined for them. So, if their creation were intended only for annihilation (*fanā'*), it would be impossible to make that by way of which is their persistence (*baqā'*).[236]

And finally, (5) The sociological argument:

> And if (the above) stands established, then it is necessary that there be a basis (i.e., Reason) which will put them (men) together and prevent them from mutual conflict and difference from which comes their destruction and annihilation; ... there must be someone who will show them how to live and survive; ... there must be someone who can demonstrate his capability for leadership (*al-imāmah*); ... and who knows the best to run their worldly affairs and in whom they can seek refuge and upon whom they can rely.[237]

As we can see, al-Māturīdī's arguments for Reason are more diverse and complete than those for Tradition. No wonder, he had to make sure that his Reason was well presented and explained in order to be accepted, if not on an equal footing with the Scripture, at least next to it, by the Muslim orthodox circles of his time.

Having stated the above arguments for Reason, al-Māturīdī did not want to leave us without making it known that he objects to both the subjectivism of some sophists[238] and the inspirational mysticism (*ilhām*)of the Sufis.[239] Al-Māturīdī's objection to the former is that:

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[236] *Ibid.*

[237] *Ibid.*

[238] Al-Taftāzānī relates that there are three different groups of sophists: (1) العنادية , those who resist any kind of knowledge even the sensual; (2) العندية , those who favor subjectivism which al-Māturīdī has in mind here; and (3) اللا ادرية , those who see no way to knowledge, i.e., agnostics. See, *Sharḥ*, p. 11; Cf. also *Uṣūl*, pp. 6–7.

> The aspects of the religious contradiction and conflict are known, whereas everyone is claiming that he possesses the truth. It is absurd that the attainment to the truth (*sabab al-ḥaqq*) should work in this way, namely, that the falsehood be conceived in the same manner as truthfulness.[240]

It is interesting to note here that al-Māturīdī uses the term *sabab*, as it is shown above, and the plural in the phrase *asbāb*, *asbāb al-ma'rifah*, a few lines earlier. Wensinck translates *sabab* as the root of knowledge by saying that: "Later dogmatics (meaning 'Umar al-Nasafī d. 537 H.) call the roots of knowledge the *asbāb*, i.e., the channels which supply knowledge."[241] I am sure that had Wensinck had at his disposal al-Māturīdī's *K. Tawḥīd*, his conclusion would have been different.

As for *ilhām*, al-Māturīdī rejects it on the ground that each one of those who favor the inspiration comes with the same rhetorical sign (*dalīl*) which does not exclude the possibility of differences and contradictions which, in turn, lead to annihilation. On this same ground al-Māturīdī rejects knowledge based on lot-casting (*qur'ah*) and that of *qā'f*, the one who blindly follows other's assertions.[242]

Although al-Māturīdī, as it appears from the preceding presentation, gives Reason a great deal of freedom, he does not leave it infinite in its capabilities. Thus, in his *Ta'wīlāt* he tells us that:

> The rational faculties (*'uqūl*) were originated as finite and therefore are short of grasping the absolute reality

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[239] Compare this to al-Baghdādī who considers *ilhām* as a source of knowledge. See, *Ibid*, p. 14; Cf. also *Muslim Creed*, p. 260.

[240] *Tawḥīd*, p. 6.

[241] See, *Muslim Creed*, p. 260.

[242] Cf. *Tawḥīd*, p. 6.

> of the objects ... This is because the rational faculties are parts of the world which is in its entirety finite.[243]

In fact, that is the basic reason why we need the *Sam'* (Tradition) to be both a guide and guardian to Reason, but at the same time we need the reason to give a proper meaning to the tradition. Hence, al-Māturīdī conceives the relation between Tradition and Reason as an organic one. Reason is free to speculate in as much as it endeavors to grasp the true essence of the tradition, and Tradition is valid inasmuch as its purpose, structure and function are conceived as acceptable by reason. The following table shows al-Māturīdī's roots of knowledge and the organic relation of its traditional and rational means:

Religious Knowledge

Roots	Means
Sam' (Tradition)	1. Divine report 2. Prophetic report a. *Mutawātir* b. *Āhād* 3. General report a. geneology b. geography/history c. politics d. arts
'Aql (Reason)	1. The senses 2. Speculation a. metaphysics[244] b. hermeneutics c. analogy

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[243] Al-Maghribī, p. 39.

[244] I am aware of the fact that *Naẓar* (speculation) assumes metaphysics, but al-Māturīdī's statement about *Naẓar* as a source of knowledge clearly indicates two kinds of speculation as he divides it into metaphysics and hermeneutics:

ثم الاصل في لزوم القول بعلم النظر وجوه: احدها الاضطرار اليه في علم
الحس والخبر، وذلك فيما يبعد من الحواس او يلطف، فيما يرد من الخبر
(See, *Tawḥīd*, p. 9.) انه في نوع ما يحتمل الغلط اولا

c) *Means of Knowledge*

Al-Māturīdī perceives both the *Sam‘* and *‘Aql*, as two roots of religious knowledge, working autonomously as such. However, they meet with and depend on each other through their means for obtaining knowledge about reality of things. Thus, al-Māturīdī tells us that there are three such channels or means (*sabīl* pl.*subul)*[245] through which we may attain knowledge of the realities (العلم بحقائق الاشيا). These are: (1) *al-‘Iyān* (sensory knowledge), (2) *al-Akhbār* (reports) and (3) *al-Naẓar* (speculative thinking). The second of these three means pertains to *Sam‘*, while the other two pertain to *‘Aql*.

(1) *Akhbār*

On the basis of our distinction between *Sam‘* and *Khabar* which we have made above and as it is shown in the table, it appears that al-Māturīdī is talking about three kinds of reports: (a) the divine, (b) the Prophetic and (c) the general or historic reports. Al-Māturīdī's divine report is identical with the divine knowledge of the later Ash‘arite theologians, such as, al-Bāqillānī, al-Baghdādī, and al-Juwainī. Al-Baghdādī calls it *Shar‘*,[246] while both al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwainī call it *al-‘Ilm al-Qadīm* (eternal knowledge) as opposed to *al-‘Ilm al-Ḥādith* (originated or human relative knowledge).[247] We should like to say here, however, that al-Māturīdī does not explicitly speak of the divine report as such. Nevertheless, in his arguing about the creation of substances he implicitly alludes to what is the undeniable truth of the divine report. Thus he states:

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[245] Al-Māturīdī uses three kinds of terms to express sources or principles and means or channels of knowledge: *aṣl* pl. *uṣūl* (principle or source), *sabab* pl. *asbāb* (which is used interchangeably as principle or source, and means or channel), and *sabīl* pl. *subul* (though rarely means or channel).

[246] See, *Uṣūl*, p. 14.

[247] See, *Tamhīd*, p. 7; *Irshād*, p. 13. It is interesting that neither al-Nasafī nor al-Ṣābūnī (d. 580 H.), both Māturīdites, makes this distinction. Cf. *Sharḥ* and *Bidāyah*.

> The proof for the creation of substances is the testimony of all three above mentioned aspects of the means of knowledge about things. So, as for the *khabar*, it is that which has been affirmed by God and for the like of which no man is able to bring an opposite proof. Thus God has affirmed that "He is the Creator of everything,"[248] that He is "the Originator of the heavens and earth"[249] and that "the sovereignty of what is in them belongs to Him."[250] And we have already explained the necessity of the (truth of this) report. There is no one among the living beings who has claimed eternity for himself or has in any way demonstrated his eternity. Nay, even if he claimed that, his lie would be determined by necessity.[251]

It is then this report, the divine one, to which Reason must submit and which it must recognize as an absolute truth. Of course, Reason is invited to interpret those points of the divine report which require an interpretation (*ta'wīl*). So the relationship between the divine report, i.e., revelation as such, and Reason is one of give-and-take.

Turning for a while from our main subject, we would like to point out that it would be a lot easier to identify the above statements as referring to divine report if al-Māturīdī called it the Qur'ānic report or simply the Qur'ān, as we have it in the roots of Islamic Law. But somehow the *Mutakallims* tend to use, as we have already indicated elsewhere, different terms from those of the *Fuqahā'* in discussing their *Kalām*. Therefore, Wensinck's question: "why are the roots of dogmatics not the same as those of the law and why is legal knowledge only one kind out of many?"

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[248] Qur'ān: 39:62.

[249] *Ibid.*, 2:117; 6:101.

[250] *Ibid.*, 3:189; 5:18; 40:120.

[251] *Tawḥīd*, p. 11.

is well warranted here. His answer to this question is that when al-Shāfi'ī was establishing the doctrine of the roots of *Fiqh* in the eighth century, philosophy had just begun to exert its influence on the educated Muslims;

> ... but it was still far from occupying a leading position. This explains the absence in the theory of the roots of the law of a doctrine of cognition or any other philosophical outlook. At the time when this doctrine originated (meaning al-Baghdādī's d. 429 h.), jurisprudence was under the tutelage of theology and the latter was indisputably the highest authority.[252]

As on many other occasions when some scholars of Islam, Muslim and western alike, are faced with a problem in Islamic cultural development, such as this one, they tend to either praise Greek philosophy for recognizing it or blame it for unduly bringing it about. We do not have a better solution to this particular problem than that of Wensinck's, but we would like to point out that al-Māturīdī preceded al-Baghdādī by a full century and that his roots of *Kalām* are also different from those of the *Fiqh*. Therefore, the answer to this question must be sought in a somewhat different manner than as a mere philosophical influence on Islamic theology.

Let us return to the second kind of report, i.e., to the Prophetic one. As we have already seen, al-Māturīdī considers the reports of the Prophets to be in the highest degree of truthfulness. For, besides the fact that their reports are the most trustworthy, if we are to accept any report at all, they are also backed up with clear miraculous signs. In effect, then, what we are talking about here is the divine report, i.e., the revelation to which the Summanīya and Brahmans object. This, in turn, raises the question about the possibility of prophethood which, as far as the religion is concerned, is absolutely admissible. The subject of prophethood is usually dealt with by the *Mutakallims* as a separate theme. What is problematic about the Prophetic report, however, is that part of the reports which are related from the Prophet by others. This is because of the fact that:

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[252] See *Muslim Creed*, pp. 252–54.

> (These) reports which come down to us from the Prophets, come down from mouth to mouth which are, therefore, liable to error and lie. For, (the transmitters) do not possess the proof of their truthfulness nor do they have the demonstrative proof of their infallibility. In that case, therefore, this kind of report needs to be examined.[253]

Thus, al-Māturīdī continues to explain that, if the concerned report which is related from the Prophet turns out to be transmitted by those whose reliability is undoubtedly proved, that report has the quality of *al-khabar al-mutawātir* (reliable report) and it must be admitted as true knowledge. This is so even if each and every one of that chain of the transmitters does not have the desirable degree of such reliability. For the reliability of the rest of them is sufficient that the given report be regarded as valid.

Now there is another type[254] of Prophetic report which, however, does not have the above mentioned degree of validity. It concerns those reports from the Prophet which are transmitted by some individuals. This kind of report, al-Māturīdī explains, although not having that degree of the validity of the *mutawātir* report, is not to be either accepted or rejected until after a thorough investigation into it. So, if it happens to be compatible with either Reason or the senses, it is also to be admitted as legitimate knowledge about things.

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[253] *Tawḥīd*, p. 9.

[254] Compare al-Baghdādī's division of the reports into *mutawātir* (reliable), *āḥād* (individual), and *mutawassiṭ* (middle or near to *mutawātir*), see, *Uṣūl*, p. 12. On the whole, al-Baghdādī is far more elaborate on this question than either al-Māturīdī or his two followers, 'Umar al-Nasafī and al-Ṣābūnī, see, *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13, 20–23.

It is not difficult for any person familiar with Islam to recognize this kind of Prophetic report as the *Sunna* or *Ḥadīth* which is thoroughly dealt with by the Muslim jurists for the purposes of Islamic Law. The idea of *matn* and *isnād* is well known in the field of the science of *Ḥadīth*,[255] and their rules are necessary for any serious understanding of Islamic tradition and historiography.

It is quite natural for al-Māturīdī to take on the issue of the Prophetic report and to give us a lengthy exposition of its problems concerning the field of *Kalām*. For, he himself was very well versed in the field of *Fiqh* and was keenly aware of its problems of *matn* and *isnād*. Therefore, we can admit his exposé on this matter as satisfactory, and, accept his insistence on the intervention of Reason (*ijtihād*) before the Prophetic report becomes a source of knowledge as warranted. We can also find an excuse for his not being more elaborate about the divine report in the fact that the Qur'ān is always taken for granted in any possible aspect of Islamic learning. But, it is very hard for us to accept al-Māturīdī's uncritical approach to the general or historical reports, not only in regard to Islamic theology, but in general. No doubt, his arguments, that the knowledge about our name, essence, existence etc., is only possible by way of report, and, so, that it is as equally necessary as that of sensual self-consciousness, and that the very denial of the report is a report, is well taken. But this does not mean that any historical report which we receive is as equally true as this one. From al-Māturīdī's treatment of this problem one gets the impression, though, that all historical reports are to be admitted because of the fact that the events in the remote unseen past can be known only through reporting.[256] Of course it is assumed that this reporting be true, i.e., *mutawātir.* But the vigor of the reservation toward this kind of report, and the necessity of the *ijtihād* into these historical reports, is not as cogently expressed as that regarding the Prophetic reports. Thus, for example, both al-Nasafī[257] and al-Ṣābūnī,[258] who certainly followed al-Māturīdī, say that there are only two kinds of reports and vigorously require *istidlāl* (human reasoning) as the condition for the acceptance of the Prophetic report, while as regards to the historical ones, they only state that they must be *mutawātir* without explaining what this means exactly.

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[255] Cf., SEI, art. "Hadith"

[256] For the whole exposition of al-Māturīdī's treatment of this question see, *Tawḥīd*, pp. 8–9.

What we have here is, of course, an issue of the field of historiography, but one which a serious theologian obviously cannot ignore either. It seems, however, that the theologians want a desirable level of skillfulness in this regard. But the real reason for this lack of thoroughness in treating the historical report, in comparison to that of the Prophetic report, lies, I think, in the fact that al-Māturīdī, as well as his later followers, was eager to prove the validity of the *khabar* as a possible source of knowledge which the Summanīya and the Brahmans rejected altogether as impossible. On this basis they then tried to further prove the possibility of prophethood as an essential feature of religion. Therefore, the overwhelming desire on the part of al-Māturīdī to justify the *khabar* as a principle led him to overlook the details of it. On the other hand, his knowledge of *Fiqh* and his awareness of the problems of *Ḥadīth* led him to be more specific and to elaborate on the Prophetic report.

With this analysis of the third kind of al-Māturīdī's reports we may clearly see that *Sam'* as a root of Islamic theology is linked with Reason. This will become even clearer in our treatment of the means of knowledge which are related to Reason.

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[257] Cf., *Sharḥ*, pp. 16–18.

[258] Cf., p. 30.

(2) *'Iyān*

Al-Māturīdī considers sensory knowledge or sense reference as knowledge against which ignorance cannot stand. In fact, even animals possess this kind of knowledge. Therefore, if someone denies it, by being exposed to a physical pain he would be forced to admit the existence of it. Sensory knowledge is the human physical self-consciousness which is translatable into his mental self-consciousness as well. Thus through it man knows by necessity his own essence (*mā'iyyah*) and existence (*hastiyyah*).[259]

Al-Māturīdī does not state how many senses (*ḥawāss*) are involved in sensual human knowledge. That, however, we learn from his followers, namely, 'Umar al-Nasafī and Ṣābūnī, both of whom say that they are five: hearing (*sama'*), sight (*baṣar*), smell (*shamm*), taste (*dhawq)* and touch (*lams*).[260] Generally speaking, the *Mutakallims'* arguments for the necessity of sensory knowledge are directed against the agnosticism of the sophists.

And now we are to enter into the most important area of the means of Islamic theological knowledge, i.e., *Naẓar* (speculative thinking)[261] which encompasses in one way or another all the above mentioned means and is the strongest and the most indispensable link between the theological roots of knowledge: the *Sam'* and *'Aql*.

(3) *Naẓar*

First of all we should like to point out that al-Māturīdī is neither a philosopher nor a logician, but in his thought we find a little of both philosophy and logic. He uses the term philosophy (*falsafah* [more often *dahriyyah*]) only twice,[262] while on many occasions he employs philosophical terms, such as, *māʾiyyah* (essence)[263] (which later became *mahiyyah*), *hastiyyah* (a Persian word meaning external existence),[264] *hayūlā* (prime matter, matter, substance),[265] and, of course, very frequently the terms *jawhar* (substance) and *ʿaraḍ, ḥadath, muḥdath* (accident, accidental or origination originated), *muḥdith* (originator) and the like. He explicitly mentions Aristotle's name,[266] but none of the names of the Muslim philosophers. Al-Māturīdī's main philosophical problem, as we shall see, is to disprove the philosophical doctrine of the eternity of the world.

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[259] Cf. *Tawḥīd*, p. 7.

[260] See, *Sharḥ*, pp. 11–12; *Bidāyah*, p. 30; Cf. also *Tawḥīd*, p. 9.

[261] Vajda gives the French equivalent (*La connaissance chez Saadia* ..., p. 145) as "reflection discursive", and Bernand (*Le 'ilm chez les premiers Mu'tazilites*, SI 26, 24) as "examen rationnel"; Hourani (*Islamic Rationalism*, 14) translates it as "inquiry", Frank (*Fundamental Assumptions*, 8) as "enquire", and Peters (Aristotle and Arabs, 151) as "speculation" which is similar to van Ess's translation "Spekulation und Diskursive Denken" (*Erkenntnislehre*, 238). Cited by M. Peters, *God's Created Speech*, Leiden, 1976, p. 57 no. 105.

As for logic, al-Māturīdī is fully aware of Aristotle's *Organon*, especially of his book on the *Categories*. Therefore, because of the historic importance of al-Māturīdī's relation to Aristotelian logic and of the early development of Islamic orthodox theology, we think it appropriate to quote the original passage in which al-Māturīdī explains Aristotle's categories in the context of his discussion of the different views on the primordial elements of the world:

> وذكر ارسطاطاليس - وهو صاحب هذا القول في كتابه الذي سماه المنطق -
> عشرة ابواب: باب العين، كقولك انسان، سميت عينه، وباب المكان، كقولك
> أين، والصفة بقولك كيف، الوقت متى، العددكم، والمضاف مما في ذكر
> الواحد ذكر آلاخر، الاب والعبد والشريك ونحوه،
> وذو، كقولك: ذو شرف وذو اهل، ونحو ذلك سموه باب الجدة،
> والنصبة كالقيام والقعود، الفاعل كقولك: اكل ونحوه. المفعول قولك: ماكول،
> لايقدر احد ان يذكر ما يخرج عن جملة ذلك.

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[262] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 25, 187.

[263] *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 16, 18, 29, 38, 40, 42, 43, 57, 60, 71, 108. This term was used by al-Kindī which later has become known as *mahiyyah* (quidditas). Cf. *Rasāʾil al-Kindiyyah*, p. 294.

[264] *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 24, 41, 42, 79, 104, 176.

[265] *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 24, 30, 63, 64, 65, 95, 112, 113, 118, 119, 120, 121, 147. 148, 149,150, 151.

[266] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

> (Aristotle — the author of this statement in his book which he called *manṭiq* — mentions ten categories: (1) the category of Substance, like your saying 'man', i.e., what is called his substance (essence); (2) the category of Place, like your saying 'where'; (3) Quality, like your saying 'how'; (4) Time, 'when'; (5) Quantity, 'how much'; (6) Relation, in which the mention of one thing involves the other too, like father, slave, companion, and the like; (7) Possession, like your saying 'nobility' and 'one who has family', and the like; they call it the category of Possession; (8) State or Condition, like standing and sitting; (9) Action, like your saying 'he ate', and the like; and (10) Passion, like your saying 'eaten'. No one is able to mention anything that goes beyond this totality).[267]

This passage shows two things. First, it shows that al-Māturīdī had access to Aristotle's logical works, and, second, that he had the capability of understanding the logical and philosophical problems it treats. Both of these two points Ibrahim Madkour should have noticed when he investigated the impact of the *Organon* on the formation of the Sunnite theological orthodoxy.[268] However, as we have said, al-Māturīdī is not a logician who tells us how to proceed in matters of *Naẓar*. Rather, he tells us why we should engage in the pursuit of speculative thought. Thus, he gives us several arguments for the necessity of speculative thinking, two of which are most conspicuous, viz., the metaphysical and hermeneutical:

> Then, said al-Māturīdī, there are several aspects on the basis of which *Naẓar* is necessary. One of them is its necessity for both the field of sensory and traditional knowledge. That is to say, (we need the speculative

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[267] *Ibid*, p. 147. Cf. Aristotle, *Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics*, translated by H.P. Cooke and H. Tredennick, London, 1938, p. 17.

[268] Cf. *L'Organon d'Aristote dans le monde arabe*, Paris, 1934.

> thinking) in that which is either beyond the reach of the senses or is meticulous, as well as in that which concerns the kind of reports which may or may not be erroneous.[269]

After this al-Māturīdī mentions that *Naẓar* is a necessary tool for the appreciation of the true revelation, Prophetic miracles, and the like. He, then, supports this also by quoting a few portions of the Qur'ānic verses, such as: "*And we will show them the signs in the horizons* ... (41:53); "*Have not they seen the camel* ..." (88:18); "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth* ..." (2:164); and "*And in them themselves, do not they observe.*" (51:21).

> (There are these) and other (verses), al-Māturīdī asserts, which encourage *Naẓar* and which have imposed (*alzama*) the consideration (*i'tibār*), and commanded (*amara*) thinking (*tafakkur*) and contemplation (*tadabbur*). (The Qur'an) also has informed that this (*Naẓar*) will successfully lead them (men) to the truth and will show them the (right) path.[270]

The rest of his arguments are pretty much the same as those we have already cited while talking about the root of Reason.[271]

As can be seen, therefore, al-Māturīdī's speculative thinking is still more apologetic than logical, and it is still more dogmatic than analytic. Nevertheless, he has his own logic which is furnished by his *Fiqh* background and colored by his still superficial knowledge of logic *per se.* His logic is especially displayed in his discussion of the analogical method in *Kalām.* In fact, al-Māturīdī's main reason for raising the question of analogy seems to be his objection to Aristotle's notion that "analogy is the equality of ratios,"[272] on the basis of which, al-Māturīdī asserts, Aristotle worked out his doctrine of the eternity of the world.

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[269] *Tawḥīd*, p. 9.
[270] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[271] See, p. 68–69.

But before we bring al-Māturīdī's arguments against this kind of analogy, we should like to say that there are three different sets of terms, which are employed in three different fields of Islamic knowledge, i.e., traditional, theological, and philosophical, but which have the same purpose, that is, to derive the unknown knowledge from the known facts by way of analogy. In the traditional field, i.e., *Fiqh* discussions, we have *aṣl* (root or known) — *far'* (branch or unknown); in theology we have *shāhid* (present) — *ghā'ib* (absent), and *ma'lūm* (known) — *majhūl* (unknown); and in philosophy we have *muqaddimah* (premise or known) — *maṭlūb* (sought or unknown). Al-Māturīdī uses both the traditional and theological terms interchangeably. This well indicates both his strong attachment to the milieu of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* and his attempt to work out a theological vocabulary in this respect.

Without quoting either the source or the person, a usual procedure of his, al-Māturīdī says that:

> People differ as to the aspect of the signification (*dalālah)* of *shāhid* (present) to *ghā'ib* (absent). Some say that it (the former) is like (*'alā mithlihi*) it (the latter). This is because it (the present) is a root (*aṣl*) for that which is absent. And the root does not differ from its branch. In addition to that, the way of knowing the absent is that (of knowing) the present; and the analogy of the thing is to its equal. (By way of this reasoning) they have established the eternity of the world. For, the present signifies or points to its likeness. So, then, the one who is absent from it has come to know it too. Then, it (the present) always indicates or points to its likeness before it; and in that is the necessity of the eternity of all.[273]

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[272] Cf. Wolfson, *Kalām*, p. 21.

[273] *Tawḥīd*, p. 28.

It would be very interesting to know from where al-Māturīdī gathered this information. For, as Wolfson explains, "Though it is uncertain whether the *Nicomachean Ethics* was translated into Arabic, the same definition of analogy is implied in the explanation given by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* of the expression "one according to analogy ...", which in the Arabic translation reads: "And those which are one according to equality (*musāwāt*) are those whose relation (*nisba*) is the same as the relation of one thing to another thing."[274] In any case, whether al-Māturīdī got this information of Aristotle's analogy from *Nicomachean Ethics,* which would indicate that this work was known to the Muslims at an early age, or from his *Metaphysics*, or whether he read it from some Arabic translations, it is clear that al-Māturīdī was aware of what was going on in logic and philosophy at the time. Therefore, I think that al-Māturīdī's relation to philosophy and its influence on his thought deserve a special and serious study which, I believe, would provide us with a completely different view from the one which has been portrayed so far of the genesis and the development of Islamic theology in general and of the emergence of Islamic orthodoxy and its relation to Islamic Law in particular.

In response to the above analogy of Aristotle which is based on the equality of the two similar things, al-Māturīdī gives the following arguments and proofs, which come from his knowledge of the principles of *Fiqh* and his employment of logic. First, al-Māturīdī utilizes the definite conclusion of the *Uṣūliyyūn* of *Fiqh* which says that:

> (The present) indicates the likeness of it (the absent) as well as to that which is different from it, even the more obvious different thing.[275]

Having said this, al-Māturīdī continues by giving the following *al-sabr wa al-taqsīm* (examination and division) logical proofs:

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[274] For more on this logical tool see, *Ibid.*, pp. 107–8.
[275] *Tawḥīd*, p. 28.

> This is because of the fact that whoever sees something of the world, that something indicates that it is originated or eternal; and that both the eternity or the origination are neither its likeness nor equality. Then, (by the same token) it indicates that either it had an originator or that it comes into existence by itself; and both of these two (possibilities) are different from it. Then, also, it indicates either the wisdom of its agent or its foolishness, and, either to its volition or predetermined nature. And all this is different from what he sees, and it does not mean that there is likeness to it. For, if that meant so, it would be necessary to imagine that anyone who sees himself, sees the whole world to be like himself. And that is far from being the case. Therefore, it has been established that the substance is not realized in its likeness to an absent thing. Only one aspect of it is realized as we have just mentioned. But if you know the quality of the present and if you are informed that that quality belongs to an absent thing as well, you will know, then, that, it is like that (the thing present), but not that it is in essentially like that. It is permissible, then, that it (present) is like it (absent) in this manner and by way of which it is known, I mean, body and fire. Therefore, everyone knows body and fire, even though he did not see them.[276]

On the basis of the above argument, al-Māturīdī was able to bring the following proofs too against the notion of analogy of equality:

> Thus, writing indicates a writer. But who does not indicate his quality and similarity, it is not permissible to

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[276] *Ibid.*

> be either angel, or human, or *Jinn.* Therefore, writing does not signify the essence of the writer, nor his quality, nor is it his likeness. Writing testifies though to any possible writer. On this analogy is the case with the world. It and what is in it indicate a possible Creator, but do not signify his quality and essence. It is also the same with building, transcription, ships and arts. Therefore, analogy (*qiyās*) is necessary for proving the Creator of the world by the world with all of its wonders and things whose coming to be cannot be but at the hands of a wise and knowing Being; it is not necessary, however, that his quality and essence be known through it.[277]

From this, al-Māturīdī, concludes:

> the warranty (the indication of *al-shāhid* to *al-ghā'ib*) is based on their differences and not on their equality.[278]

This kind of analogical proof and other similar logical means will be seen further and elaborated more fully when we come to discuss his theological ideas about the world, God, and man in the following chapter of this study. For the moment, I would like to say in conclusion of this discussion that al-Māturīdī's logical procedure is not as subtle as that of Ibn Sīnā, nor is it as meticulous as that of al-Ghazālī. But, at the same time, al-Māturīdī's justification of Tradition is more appealing and cogent than that of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, his vindication of Reason is richer and smoother than that of al-Ash'arī, and his theological reasoning is more promising than that of the Mu'tazilites. In short, one of the best early scenarios for synthetic Muslim theology lay in the thought and works of our unduly forgotten scholar of the glorious city of Samarqand, Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, to whom, on behalf of those who have neglected his contribution, I would like to give through this study an apology and hope to make up for some of these unfortunate omissions. So far, we hope we have succeeded in that effort as we have tried to bring out several new facts about our scholar. Thus, we have hopefully demonstrated (1) al-Māturīdī's intellectual independence; (2) his being among the earliest Sunnite *Mutakallims* to seriously attempt a theological theory of knowledge; (3) his quite successful integration of Tradition and Reason and their organic interdependence through their various means of knowledge; (4) his familiarity with philosophy and Aristotelian logical works; and (5) his much greater role and significance in the formulation of the Islamic theological orthodoxy than scholars — both Muslim and non-Muslim — have recognized so far. In the following chapter we shall try to further substantiate these conclusions as we come to concentrate on al-Māturīdī's three main theological problems, i.e., the world, God, and man.

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[277] *Ibid*, p. 29.

[278] *Ibid.*

Chapter Three

Al-Māturīdī's Theological Ideas

Theology is "the study of God and his relation to the world especially by analysis of the origins and teachings of an organized religious community."[279] There are two basic terms used in Islamic literature which denote the meaning of theology, i.e., *Kalām*, meaning Islamic theology proper, and *Ilāhiyyāt*, by which is meant Islamic philosophical theology. Literally, *Kalām* means 'speech' whose technical usage either implies the discussion about the origin and nature of the speech of God, i.e., the Qur'ān, or it denotes the logical feature (*Logos)* of Islamic theology which it acquired through its contact with the Aristotelian logic, or it simply indicates the theoretical nature of *Kalām* as opposed to the practical one of *Fiqh* (Islamic Law).[280] The term *Ilāhiyyāt* is in the plural form of the Arabic relative adjective, the simple singular of which is *Ilāhī* meaning pertaining to deity. The technical difference between these two terms is that between theology and philosophy. Thus Ibn Khaldūn explains:

> Behold, that the usual procedure of the reasoning of the *Mutakallims* is based on the notion of proving the existence of God and His attributes from the existent beings and their proper states, while the philosophers inquire into the natural body within the frame of physics (*ṭabī'iyyāt)* which is (only) a part of these existent beings. The difference in approach to the natural body between the *Mutakallim* and the philosopher lies in the

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[279] See, Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, (1981), art "theology". For more on the definition, nature and objective of Western, Christian theology see, ITM, pp. 131, 208, 209, 250, 260, 305–307.

[280] Cf. *Sharḥ*, pp. 5–6; Aḥmad Amīn, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*, pp. 9–10.

> fact that the latter looks at it in terms of its being moving or at rest, while the former looks at it in terms of its proving that it has an agent. The same goes for the philosopher's inquiry in theology (*ilāhiyyāt*) by way of which he seeks to comprehend absolute existence and that which is specific to its essence, while the *Mutakallim's* inquiry is concentrated on the existence of the world by way of which he seeks to prove its creator.[281]

Al-Māturīdī is a Muslim *Mutakallim* whose first task, according to the above description, is not to inquire into the existence of the world as such but rather through its nature and function to find indisputable proofs of the existence of its Creator, i.e., God, and then to work out a guidance for the proper relationship between Him and man. Hence, we may conclude that there are basically three major theological issues i.e., the World, God and Man, to which all other possible theological problems have a subordinate status. Therefore, in this chapter we will present al-Māturīdī's treatment of these three main theological themes, hoping that through them we may be able to see the whole spectrum of his theological thought.

Theme One—*The World*

"The world exists!" is a simple sentence which has raised complex questions, such as, how the world was brought about: through itself, or through an eternal, living, knowing, and powerful agent, or through an irrational element(s), or *ex nihilo,* or by mere chance?; from when the world exists: from eternity or from a certain point in time? and why it was brought about: for a serious known or unknown purpose or for no purpose at all? All rational men from time immemorial and of all possible religious and philosophic persuasions were faced with these and other related questions and to them they all tried to give their respective answers. It is very curious to see how a Muslim thinker of the ninth-tenth century tackled these problems and what his solutions to them were.

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[281] See, *Muqaddimah,* p. 441.

First, how was the world brought into existence? Al-Māturīdi's response to this question is that the world was created by an eternal, living, knowing, and powerful actor, i.e. God, so that the world is not eternal but has its beginning in time, and that it was not brought about through irrational element(s) nor by mere chance. His sign-proof (*dalīl*) of the creation of the world is the generation of the substances (*A‘yān*), and his arguments for that are threefold, viz., (a) traditional, (b) perceptual and (c) rational, the three main tools of his theory of knowledge.

(a) *Traditional arguments*

As we shall see, al-Māturīdī brings far more perceptual and rational arguments into the edifice of his theology than those of Tradition. The reason is, I think, that his primary concern was to prove the soundness of the Islamic doctrine as opposed to Indo-Iranian dualism, Judeo-Christian entangled monotheism, and the profanity of Greek philosophy. Now, al-Māturīdī thought this possible only through the employment of the kind of arguments shared by all, i.e., the senses and Reason. Hence, al-Māturīdī resorts to the traditional arguments only in the case when they seem to him to be obvious proofs of the points under his consideration, as is the case here, or when he feels that the perceptual and rational arguments have reached their point of exhaustion and so cannot carry out the task of an apodictic demonstration any more, as we shall see shortly.

In this particular instance, that is, the issue concerning the proofs of the generation of *a‘yān* (substances or atoms),[282] al-Māturīdī quotes the portions of three verses of the Qur'ān, i.e., "(الله) خالق كل شي..." ([*God*] *is the Creator of*

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282 See, below.

all things);[283] " بديع السموات والارض... "*(He* [*God*] *is the Originator of the heavens and the earth)*;[284] and " ما فيهن له ملك " *(to God belongeth the domain of them* [*the heavens and the earth*] *and of that which is in between them)*.[285] Having mentioned this necessary feature of the *ṭā'ah* (religious obedience) argument, al-Māturīdī went on to give a *bayān* (elucidation) of it or an apologetic proof for it. Thus, he argues that the above affirmation by God of the creation of all things no one can disprove nor prove. For there is no living being that has ever claimed eternity for itself, nor has it even alluded to that in any way or manner. Because, even if someone claimed his eternity, his lie would be discovered by virtue of necessity. Being thus the case with the animate beings, the inanimate things are then more appropriate to be created because they are in subordination to the animate beings.[286] Al-Māturīdī's above arguments may be restated in the following two syllogisms:

A

The world exists
God affirms to have created all things

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[283] See, *Tawḥīd*, p. 11. The complete verse reads: الله خالق كل وهو
على كل شئ وكيل
(God is Creator of all things, and He is Guardian and Disposer of all affairs) [Qur'ān: 39: 62].

[284] See, *Tawḥīd*, p. 11. The full verse reads: بديع لسموت
والارض واذا
قضى امر انما يقول
له كن فيكون
(He [God] is the Originator of the heavens and the earth: when He decreeth a matter, He sayeth to it: "Be," and it is) [Qur'ān: 2:117].

[285] See, *Tawḥīd*, p. 11. Cf. the different Qur'anic phrasing of this same meaning in 3:189; 5:18, 40, 120. From this fragmental citation of al-Māturīdī of the Qur'ānic verses we can see how the Scripture assertions were taken for granted by the *Mutakallims* and, therefore, their dogmatic approach to the same. In this particular instance, probably, al-Māturīdī felt that by his *K. Ta'wīlāt*, he had given such a satisfactory elaboration on these points that there was no need to fully repeat it here. And, as a matter of fact, he did. Cf. al-Maghribī, pp. 113–116.

[286] *Tawḥīd*, p. 11.

Therefore, God has created the world

B

No animate being has ever claimed eternity for itself
The substances are inanimate
Therefore, substances are *a fortiori* temporal too

(b) *Perceptual arguments*

Al-Māturīdī's perceptual and rational arguments for the creation of the substances, i.e., of the world, naturally overlap each other. Therefore, we shall mention here only the arguments which al-Māturīdī considers pertinent to the physical perceptions, hoping to repeat of them only the necessary minimum when we come to deal with his rational arguments. Thus, al-Māturīdī developed the following perceptual proofs from which the creation of the world can be proved:

1. *From Dependency*
2. *From Corruptibility*
3. *From Composition*
4. *From Finiteness of its Parts*
5. *From Change and Annihilation*
6. *From the Possibility of its Beginning*

The first proof of al-Māturīdī, that from dependency, involves three propositions. First, every substance is perceived to be necessarily dependent and in need. Second, the condition of eternity is self-sufficiency. Third, dependency and need necessitate a being other than it itself. Out of these three propositions he concludes that the world is created and cannot be eternal.[287]

The second proof of al-Māturīdī, that from corruptibility, also contains three propositions. First, it appears that all things, while being in their full state of knowledge and power, are both ignorant and incapable of preventing themselves from being corrupted. Second, if that is the case with an animate, it is more likely to be the case with an inanimate object. Third, both the animate and inanimate come into existence through other than themselves. Out of these three propositions he infers that the world cannot be eternal.[288]

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[287] *Ibid.*

The third proof of al-Māturīdī, that from composition, is also made of three propositions. First, every perceptible thing is composed of divergent and contradictory natures. Second, these divergent and contradictory natures are inclined to dissension and mutual repulsion. Third, the composition of the perceptible thing is made, therefore, by other than it itself. His inference is, then, that the world was created.[289]

The fourth proof of al-Māturīdī, that from finitude of the parts of the world, has four propositions. First, the world is made of parts and halves. Second, most of its parts are known to have become existent after they were non-existent. Third, what is true for the parts is true for the whole. Fourth, the whole which is composed of the finite parts does not become infinite. Out of these propositions he concludes that the world is temporal.[290]

The fifth proof of al-Māturīdī, that from change and annihilation, also involves four propositions. First, the world comprises good and evil, small and big, good and bad things, as well as light and darkness. Second, these facts are signs of change and annihilation. Third, this change and vanishing lead to annihilation and destruction. Fourth, whatever is liable to annihilation cannot become by itself. His conclusion is then that the world was created by an agent.[291]

Finally, the sixth proof of al-Māturīdī, that from the possibility of the beginning of the world, involves three propositions. First, it is possible that the world has beginning. Second, the proposition that 'what is absent from the eyes, does not cease to exist essentially' is not true. Third, the world is known through physical perception, and not through mental reasoning. Out of these three propositions he infers then that the world cannot be eternal.[292]

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[288] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[289] *Ibid.*
[290] *Ibid.*
[291] *Ibid.*

(c) *Rational arguments*

In the foregoing arguments, which al-Māturīdi considers to be the arguments of *Ilm al-ḥiss* (knowledge through the senses), we can clearly recognize that tiny thread of philosophy which will become more visible in al-Māturīdī's weaving of his arguments from *Istidlāl* (reasoning) into the concept of the creation of the world. Therefore, as we shall see in the following presentation of his rational arguments, al-Māturīdī is quite capable of representing the Muslim *Mutakallims* in the philosophical train of the process of reasoning of the creation of the world, and is one of the best representatives among the early Muslim *Mutakallims* to carry out their message of creation *ex nihilo.*

Thus his discussion of the problem of motion and rest reserves him a seat in the train of philosophy next to the Greeks, his argument for the creation from the finitude of the parts of the world puts him in company with al-Kindī, and his advocacy of creation *ex nihilo* gives him a prominent place in the list of the medieval advocates of that doctrine, such as, Saadia (d. 942), al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013), 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025), al-Baghdādī (d. 1037), Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), al-Juwainī (d. 1085), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Shahrastānī (d. 1153), Maimonides (d. 1204), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209/10), al-Āmidī (d. 1156), al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), Bonaventure (d. 1274), Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), al-Ijī (d. 1355), Aaron ben Elijah (d. 1369), Hasdai Crescas (d. 1410), Joseph Albo (d. 1444), and Isaac Abravanel (d. 1508). Moreover, by his indirect reasoning for the creation by reason of impossibility of the eternity of the universe, al-Māturīdī directed his arguments against Aristotle's contention of eternity, the Neoplatonic concept of emanation embraced by al-Fārābī (d. 950), and the middle-way solution of Abū Bakr b. Zakariyya al-Rāzī (d. 925) who admits the idea of the creation of the world in its present form, but entertains the eternity of matter, as well as paving the way for the responses to the Muslim medieval advocates of eternity, such as Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), Abū al-Barakāt (d. *ca.* 1160), and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198).[293]

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[292] *Ibid.*

Likewise al-Māturīdī's adoption of the view of the continuous creation held by the majority of the Muslim *Mutakallims* confronted his thought against Aristotle's theory of potentiality and actuality or the theory of latency, i.e., *kumūn* and *ẓuhūr* (literally hiding-and-appearing). This theory was held by Ḍirār, al-Aṣamm, Abū al-Hudhail (d. 841–2?), al-Naẓẓām (d. 845), and Mu'ammar, all being the Basrian Mu'tazilites, by Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir, and al-Iskāfī, two Baghdādian Mu'tazilites, and by Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 795), a Rafiḍite. By espousing of the impossibility of the infinite divisibility, a view opposed only by al-Naẓẓām and Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, al-Māturīdī made himself an eligible member of all the Muslim *Mutakallim* atomists.[294]

But before coming to deal with al-Māturīdī's specific rational proofs for the origin of the universe and its creation *ex nihilo*, it will be useful for us to say a few words about the concepts and terminology he employs concerning the subject, and about the different philosophic gardens of eternity which were flourishing at the time and against which he intended to build his own protective theological wall of creationism.

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[293] Herbert Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity and Creation of the World in Islamic and Jewish Philosophy* . I could not get hold of a published copy (1985–86) of this work, but I possess, thanks to Prof. F. Rahman, a typescript copy which I have used. The pagination here is according to this typescript which is hereafter cited as Davidson. Cf. Chapter II, p. 2.

[294] Cf. *Maqālāt*; Wolfson.

As we have already indicated elsewhere, al-Māturīdī was not a man of systematic definitions of either his theological concepts or his terms. Nevertheless, he gives many clues from which one can infer the implication of his concepts and the meaning of his terms. Thus, for example, al-Māturīdī did not spell out a precise definition of the world, as did his subsequent colleagues, such as, al-Baghdādī,[295] al-Juwainī,[296] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī,[297] and others, who said that the world, according to the *Mutakallims*, is the totality of existence of substances or atoms and accidents except the existence of God. That the concept of the world of al-Māturīdī is the same as of all of the rest of the orthodox *Mutakallims*, however, is apparent from his concept of *jism* (body), which is meant to explain away the possibility of calling God by that name:

> One of the reasons, says al-Māturīdī, why God cannot be called *jism* (body) lies in the fact that its meaning in the present (world) denotes that which has directions, or that which implies limits, or that which has three dimensions. Therefore, it is not permissible that God be called by such a name. For, (directions, limits and dimensions) are the signs of creatureliness and the token of origination, all of which connote the meaning of the parts and limits which are, in turn, the indications of origination; and we have already explained that God resembles nothing, while if the name *jism* were applied to Him, He would be like the rest of the things.[298]

In this al-Māturīdī's definition of *jism*, which stands for the meaning of the external objects of the world, we can see his insistence that the existence of God is not to be conceived of as the existence of the universe in terms of either God's resemblance to it or His partaking of its essence. Thus his concept of the world is identical with that of the rest of the Muslim *Mutakallims* whose intent of the above definition was designed to secure them from any possible label of anthropomorphism as well as from any possible notion of pantheism, which was to become associated with the idea of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the unity of existence) of some Ṣūfis, especially beginning with the Ṣūfī Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/ 1240).[299] It is interesting to note here also how a Māturīdite, Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī, elaborated on the etymology of *'ālam* (the world) by saying that it was called *'ālam* because of it (the world) being a sign (*'alam*) for the affirmation of the existence of its living, hearing, seeing, and knowing Maker Who is free from any characteristic of accidentality or any indication of shortcomings; that He does not resemble any of the world's divisions, nor does He look like any of its parts; and that nothing is like Him, He Who is all-hearing and all-seeing.[300] It is obvious that this explanation of al-Nasafī of the meaning of the term *'ālam* does not only comply with the *Mutakallims'* concept of the universe, but also confirms Ibn Khaldūn's above-mentioned distinction between the philosophical and theological considerations of the operation of the phenomenal world.

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[295] *Uṣūl*, p. 23.
[296] *Irshād*, p. 17.
[297] *'Arba'īn*, p. 3.
[298] *Tawḥīd*, p. 28.

Nor does al-Māturīdī systematically talk about the notions of body, atom and accident from which one could immediately deduce his atomistic doctrine. But from his occasional statements bearing on these notions we can infer that he is an atomist like the great majority of the Muslim theologians.[301] Thus in expressing his ideas about the physical structure of the world, al-Māturīdī advanced the following concepts and terms which indicate his atomistic views: *jism* pl. *ajsām* (body), *'ayn* pl. *a'yān* (substance), *jawhar* pl. *jawāhir* (atom or substance), *araḍ* pl. *a'rāḍ* (accident), and *ṣifah* pl. *ṣifāt* (attribute or accident). According to Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī, al-Māturīdī conceived the world as being divided into substances (*a'yān*) and accidents (*a'rāḍ*), as was the view of the majority of the *Mutakallims,* and not into bodies (*ajsām*), atoms (*jawāhir*) and accidents (*a'rāḍ*), as was the view of some, e.g., al-Ṣāliḥī.[302] For al-Māturīdī, al-Nasafī explains, saw in the latter division of the world the defect of pervasion (*'ayb al-tadākhul*) since the bodies assume the atoms of which the former are actually composed.[303] Although al-Māturīdī uses the terms *jism, jawhar,* and *'ayn* interchangeably,[304] denoting atoms or compound physical objects, he is aware of the distinction between simple, indivisible parts of a body (*ajzā' mimmā lā yatajazzā, sic..*), i.e., atoms[305] and compound bodies which are constituted of those parts (atoms) and therefore which are perforce divisible or partible into accidents, motion and rest and are tall, wide, and compound.[306] Of course, neither the atoms nor bodies are eternal but in a process of continuous creation by God. As we shall soon see, the fuller recognition of al-Māturīdī's atomistic view appears in his discussion about the indivisibility of the small and the divisibility of the large.

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[299] Cf. SEI, art "Ibn (al) 'Arabī".

[300] Cited from the ms. of *Tabṣirah* by al-Maghribī. See al-Maghribī, p. 92.

[301] For more on Islamic atomism see, Salmon Pines, *Beiträge zur Islamischen Atomenlehre,* 1936.

Although al-Māturīdī uses very often the term *'araḍ* to denote an accident, he prefers to employ the term *ṣifah* (attribute) for that. For, as he remarks, the term *'araḍ* sometimes implies bodies as in the Qur'ān: ... *wa turīdūna 'araḍ al-dunyā* ... (and you want the display [temporal goods] of this world);[307] *Law kāna 'araḍan qarīban* ... (*if that*

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[302] *Maqālāt,* p. vol. i, p. 118.

[303] Cited by al-Maghribī. See, al-Maghribī, p. 96.

[304] Cf. *Tawḥīd,* p. 28; al-Maghribī, p. 96–97.

[305] *Tawḥīd,* p. 89.

[306] *Ibid.,* p. 39.

[307] Qur'ān: 8:67; *Tawḥīd,* p. 17.

had been immediate gain).[308] Naturally, like the majority of the Muslim *Mutakallims*, al-Māturīdī conceives of the accidents as necessarily having a substratum wherein they subsist, i.e., the substratum of the atoms or substances. Therefore, accidents have neither independent existence nor can they last two moments.[309] Both the atoms and the accidents are created; their relationship is interdependent in that an atom cannot be conceived of without having an accident; but the difference between them is that an atom can be a substratum for an accident, while an accident can neither be a substratum for an atom nor for an accident.

In addition, an issue with which the early Muslim theologians were preoccupied concerning the problem of eternity, creation and creation *ex nihilo* is that of the non-existent (*al-ma'dūm*). According to al-Shahrastānī, the one who originated the view that the nonexistent is something was the Mu'tazilite al-Shaḥḥām (d. 850).[310] This doctrine was, in turn, accepted by all the Mu'tazilites except al-Ṣāliḥī (d. 890)[311] and Hishām b. 'Amr al-Fuwatī (d. 840).[312] Al-Māturīdī takes up this issue with the Mu'tazilites, vehemently criticizing them, nay, charging them with the distortion of the whole concept of *tawḥīd* (monotheism):

> The Mutazilites, says al-Māturīdī, say that the non-existent is something and that for things to be things is not determined by God; God only makes things out of non-existence to come into existence.
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> In reality, then, what they say is that things are eternal

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[308] Qur'ān: 9:42; *Tawḥīd*, p. 17.

[309] *Ibid.*, p. 260. That the accidents cannot last two moments was also the opinion of al-Ash'arī, as well as of al-Naẓẓām and al-Ka'bī among the Mu'tazilites. The majority of the Mu'tazilites and the Muslim philosophers, however, believed that the accidents can last two moments. Cf. al-Maghribī, p. 99.

[310] Cf. *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, p. 151.

[311] Cf. *Farq*, p. 164.

[312] Cf. *Fiṣal*, vol. iv, p. 202; Wolfson, pp. 357–372.

> but non-existent, which in due course become existent. Therefore, in making them eternal is the denial of monotheism. For, things, (according to the Mu'tazilites), are non-existent which become different (in existence) only as they come out and appear, and things are eternally non-existent things. In this way they associated the eternity of God with other than Him which is tantamount to the denial of *tawḥīd* (*naqḍ al-tawḥīd*)[313]

By presenting this last question as to whether the non-existent is something or not, to which al-Māturīdī's answer is categorically negative as can be seen from the above statements, we may be satisfied for the time being with our acquaintance with al-Māturīdī's basic concepts and terms relating to the theological issue of the eternity of the world, its creation, and creation *ex nihilo.* Ostensibly, al-Māturīdī believes in the creation of the world and in creation *ex nihilo.* But in order to be able to properly respond to the challenges of the eternity of the world, he first must know the arguments of his opponents as well as inform his audience that he is aware of them. Therefore, we would like to hear some of the arguments of the proponents of the eternity of the universe or of matter of which al-Māturīdī is aware and then to see how he handles them and proves his doctrine of creation and creation *ex nihilo.*

As we have already indicated, al-Māturīdī's proofs for creation are by and large deduced not directly from creation but indirectly from the impossibility of eternity. In fact, the same may be said of the exponents of eternity who also deduce their proofs from the impossibility of creation.[314] Therefore, in the very argumentation of al-Māturīdī for creation we can find glimpses of the arguments for eternity which he tries to refute.

One more note here will be also very helpful to understand better the proofs of eternity, and, consequently, to appreciate better the respective responses of the exponents of creation. This note is Davidson's observation that Maimonides was probably the first to draw a dichotomy of the proofs of eternity. Thus, according to him, there are two categories of the proofs of eternity: one which was 'formulated by Aristotle' and whose arguments take departure "from the world," and the other whose arguments were "extracted" 'by subsequent philosophers' "from Aristotle's philosophy" and which take departure "from God."[315] And to this Davidson has added his own categorization of the proofs of eternity into "the more comprehensive" proofs which "seek to establish that the world has existed from eternity in the form in which it exists today," and "the less comprehensive proofs " which "seek to establish the eternity of the matter of the world, leaving open the possibility that the form of the world is not eternal, that the world was, in other words, created out of a pre-existent matter."[316] Corresponding to these two categories of the proofs of eternity are the proofs of creation. That is to say, "a more comprehensive proof of creation seeks to establish the creation of the world *ex nihilo*, whereas a less comprehensive proof seeks only to establish the creation of the form of the world, leaving open the possibility that the matter of the world is eternal."[317] As we shall see in our pursuit of these two sets of categorization, al-Māturīdī deals with both Mamonides' categories of the proofs of eternity, i.e., the proofs from the nature of the world and those from the nature of God (Prime Cause), and his responses against eternity are suitable to Davidson's more comprehensive category of the proofs of creation *ex nihilo*.

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[313] *Tawḥīd,* p. 86.

[314] See, Davidson, II.

Allowing some alternative formulations, we may discern from *K. Tawḥīd* the following proofs of the eternity of the world from the nature of matter which al-Māturīdī has found to be worthy of his attention and his proper responses. First, the argument from the nature of matter of the present world; second, the argument from the nature of time; third, the argument from the nature of motion and rest; fourth, the argument from the concept of potentiality; fifth, the argument from the nature of causality; sixth, the argument from the nature of celestial spheres; and seventh, the argument of the dualists from the nature of the mixture of good and bad.

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[315] Cf., *Guide*, II, 14; Davidson, II, p. 1–2.

[316] Cf. *Ibid.*

[317] Cf. *Ibid.*

1. *The argument from the nature of matter in the present world*

This argument for the eternity of the world, al-Māturīdī explains, rests on the assumption that everything that comes into existence does so from something else. Therefore, the world could have come into existence only from an already existing matter which is infinite and without a creator. The proof of this is based on analogical evidence of the present for the absent. For, we observe in the present world that nothing comes into existence from nothing; therefore, the same goes for that which is absent from our observation. And this is further explained, al-Māturīdī elaborates, by the contention that if it were permissible to assume the existence of contraries in the sensory realm, it is, then, permissible to conceive of man and body contrary to the intelligible; but that would be exceeding far from conception (*taṣawwur*) to imagination (*wahm*), and to a mere empty logical exercise (*al-taqaddur fi al-'aql*) which has no grounds in reality.[318] This proof we may classify as the more comprehensive proof as it seeks to establish the eternity of the world as a whole.

The less comprehensive proof, that which assumes the creation and the creator of the world but emphasizes its creation to be from pre-existent matter, has, according to al-

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[318] Cf. *Ibid.*

Māturīdī, two contentions: 1) the world was created from pre-existent eternal matter by a wise creator and 2) the world was originated not by a wise creator but through primordial matter (*hayūlā* or *ṭīnah*) undergoing natural change.[319]

2. *Arguments from the nature of time*

Philosophers also contend, al-Māturīdī explains, that the world is eternal on the basis of the nature of time. For time occurs in a succession and therefore one cannot imagine time in the past without imagining a prior time to it and so on. To maintain, then, that time was originated in time is to entertain something *ad infinitum* (*mā lā nihāyah lahū)* which is impossible. Therefore, time is eternal and so is the world. On the same basis they argued for the infinity of survival (*baqā'*) or the infinity of the large in the future.[320]

3. *The argument from the nature of motion and rest*

Al-Māturīdī does not bring the specifics of this argument for eternity, but from his contentions for creation from the nature of motion and rest we can discern that he is aware of it. For the sake of our discussion here and al-Māturīdī's consideration of the problem of motion and rest, I would like to bring here Aristotle's proof of the eternity of motion as it has been presented by Davidson: "If an absolute beginning of motion should be assumed, the object to undergo the first motion must either (i) have come into existence, or (ii) have been eternal."[321] We shall see how al-Māturīdi has responded to this reasoning.

4. *The argument from the nature of potentiality*

Philosophers argue, al-Māturīdī noticed, that everything that comes into existence, comes through the process of transformation (*inqilāb*) from A, which disappears, to B, which comes into existence, such as the coming of man from sperm and the chicken from the egg. That is to say, whatever is actually in existence is assumed to have been potentially existent in something else from which it is actually originated. So the world also must have been once only possible existence in eternal matter and then has come into its actual existence.[322]

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[319] *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 112, 141–141.

[320] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[321] Davidson, II, p. 6.

5. *The argument from the nature of causality*

Some say, al-Māturīdī observes, that everything comes into existence from something which is infinite, allowing, though, that this infinite be brought about by a wise creator. But then they contend that the creator is the cause (*'illah*) of the coming of the world into existence, and, since it is absurd that there be a cause without its effect, they concluded from the necessary nature of the cause-effect relation that the world is eternal.[323]

6. *The argument from the nature of the celestial spheres*

They base their contention, al-Māturīdī explains, for the eternity of the world on the nature of the course (*jary*) of the stars and the sun; and the heart of this argument is that the stars and the sun are eternally (*dā'ibāt*) in their circular motion. What we have here is Aristotle's understanding of the process of generation which consists, as Davidson has explained it, "in something's losing its previous character and adopting the contrary character."[324] No circular motion of the celestial bodies is contrary to any motion in a circle.[325] Having thus no contraries, the circular motion of the celestial bodies is eternal and so are the celestial bodies and the whole world.

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[322] *Tawḥīd*, p. 30.

[323] *Ibid.*

[324] Davidson, II, p. 12.

[325] *Ibid.*

7. *The dualistic argument from the nature of the mixture of good and evil*

As one can see, all the foregoing proofs of the eternity of the world may be related to the tradition of Greek philosophy. It is interesting to note, however, that al-Māturīdī is very preoccupied with Indo-Iranian dualism, indeed, almost obsessed in his attempt to refute it. His presentation of the variations of dualism is very long and elaborate.[326] It suffices here, however, that we mention only the core of the dualistic argument for eternity from the nature of the mixture of good and evil, which runs: On the observation of the world being penetrated by good and evil and on the assumption of an actor of good being praised for his good deeds and an actor of evil being blamed for his evil deeds. Therefore, it cannot be that a wise creator has created the world and these evil things in it. It follows, then, that both good and evil were eternally independent from each other but they have mixed up at a certain point in time from which this present world has come into existence.[327]

Having stated these and similar proofs of the exponents of eternity, al-Māturīdī mentions also three main reasons which led them to such false conclusions. The first of them is the people's general inclination to *taqlīd* (blind-following), which diverts them from serious and proper thinking.[328] The second reason is peculiar to certain philosophers who, on the one hand, reject that which cannot be conceived of by the common conception (*taṣawwur*) or represented in the soul but requires imagination (*wahm*),[329] and, on the other, rely on the mere analogical evidence of the present (*shāhid*) for the absent (*ghā'ib*).[330] And the third reason is that which is peculiar to the dualists, who base their proof of the eternity of the world upon the present states of good and evil of the world.[331]

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[326] Cf. G. Vajda, "Témoignahe d'al-Māturīdī sur la Doctrine des Manichéens, des Dayṣānites et des Marcionites".

[327] *Tawḥīd*, p. 113.

[328] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[329] *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31.

[330] *Ibid.*, pp. 111–112.

(d) *Al-Māturīdī's responses*

All the responses of al-Māturīdī to the proofs of the eternity of the world from the nature of matter are of the more comprehensive kind as he attempts to establish the creation of the world and creation *ex nihilo.* They all ran on his Islamic theological assumption that the creator of the heavens and the earth is a living, willing, knowing, powerful, and eternal God who has no equal in time or form, or in any other aspect of the present world, as well as the assumption that the inability of our conception to see the coming into existence from nothing is not a reason that this cannot occur by the will and the power of the willing and powerful Creator.

1. *Responses to the argument from the nature of matter of the present world*

Al-Māturīdī responds here in an *ad hominem* manner by saying: "It should be said to him," on the basis of his rejection of that which is not conceivable, "Do you perceive in your mind the rejection (*daf'*) of that which cannot be represented in the soul?" If he says 'yes', he is arrogant because of our sharing with him the perception which tells us not to reject all things which we cannot perceive. If, however, he says 'no', we apply the assumption (*taqdīr*), he is to be asked: 'When can one perceive (*yataṣawwar*) in his mind the eternity of a thing or its survival (*baqā'*) after it has disintegrated, or its becoming that whereof the eye does not see'? He might affirm of all of this despite the fact that it is not represented in the soul, while at the same time he denies the hearing, seeing, the course of a simple atom

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[331] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

(*jawhar wāḥid*) of food and the generation of the power of different atoms of hearing, seeing, cognition, hand, leg etc., by simply applying the rational proofs. As can be seen, al-Māturīdī's point is that despite the fact that there are things that we cannot perceive by our physical senses, we still know that they can exist through our reasoning. Therefore, the argument that everything that we see in the present world comes into existence from something else, and so did the world, is invalid because of the possibility of imagining that the world could have come *ex nihilo* as God willed it and as He is able to produce it from nothing.[332]

Al-Māturīdī's further proofs for the possibility of that which is inconceivable by the senses to exist in reality and of the invalidation of the analogy of equivalence between the present and the absent are based on the notion of the finitude of the coming into existence of the parts of the world. Thus, he says:

> Then it might be said to them: If everything which is observable in the present world, and which you assumed to be the proof of the world, is finite, why could not, then, the whole be that way too (finite)? For, if it is permissible that something come into existence from something which is finite and its whole is not, why, then, is it not permissible that something come into existence from something which is not its whole? Similarly, we see parts (of the world) being space for other parts, while they cannot bear to be space for the whole because of its overweight. The power belongs only to God! In all of this lies the necessity of the generation (of the world).[333]

By this particular argumentation al-Māturīdī has anticipated Crescas' proof of the creation of the world which is based on the distinction between "partial coming into existence and general coming into existence,"[334] since the coming into existence of the world as a whole need not to have been governed by the laws of partial coming into existence ...[335]

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[332] *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 31.
[333] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

As it can be seen, the heart of al-Māturīdī's argument against the proofs of the eternity of the world from the nature of matter which are mainly based on the analogy between the present and the absent lies in the fact of his rejection of that analogy and his adoption of the analogy of difference between the present and absent which, in turn, assumes the possibility of creation *ex nihilo* and the necessity of the volition of its creator.

As for the argumentation against the less comprehensive proofs of eternity which assume the eternity of pre-existent matter and the possibility of the creation of the world either by a wise creator who is its cause (*'illah*) or through the process of the natural change of primordial matter (*hayūlā*), al-Māturīdī says:

> (As for) the statement of the one who says that God (*al-Bārī*) is the cause (*'illah*) of the world, if he means by that that He is so by the necessity of His nature, it is absurd because of the fact that in it there is a way of compulsion (*ṭarīq al-iḍṭirār*). For, whoever is described in such a way, cannot be the creator of the world. On the other hand, the created world is divergent, while the one who has natural necessities is of a certain fixed kind. But if he means by (that statement) that He has created it (the world), that is correct (*mustaqīm*); only his calling Him *'illah* (cause) is incorrect (*fāsid*). And that the notion of (God being the cause) necessitates the coming into existence (of a thing) after it was not is based on the grounds of: (1) mutual contradiction

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[334] Davidson, II, p. 13.
[335] *Ibid.*

> (*tanāquḍ*), that is to say, if there is non-existence, then there occurs the need for someone to bring it into existence; and in that is the proof for it (existence) to be necessarily accidental; (2) the coming into existence of the whole of the world (by someone); and it is known that the originated comes into existence after it was not … ; and (3) (if the world were created from pre-existent matter), it would be necessary to assume that it was simultaneously in the state of integration and disintegration, motion and rest, and life and death, and in all of this there is contradiction. Therefore, it stands established that (the relationship between God and the world) is that of succession (*tatābu'*), (God) being the first and (the world) the second in order."[336]

It is obvious that al-Māturīdī excludes the possibility of the eternity of pre-existent matter by showing that nothing can be prior to the existence of God who creates everything from nothing. And the same applies for the notion of the *Hayūlā*, as some consider it to be the prime origin of the world without the intervention of the wise creator. For, even if that were the case, the world would still be originated and therefore the statement of those who deny creation would be invalid. This Prime Originator of the world, al-Māturīdī explains, we call Creator (*al-Bārī'*), i.e., God, and they call it *Hayūlā* (primordial matter; matter; substance).[337]

2. *Responses to arguments of the nature of time*

Al-Māturīdī's response to the contention that there cannot be an absolute beginning of time consists in his maxim that: "If there is no beginning, there can be nothing."[338] His elaboration on this maxim is based on: (a) the impossibility of the infinity of the small and the possibility of the infinity of the large (b) the impossibility of temporal regress and the possibility of temporal progress.

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[336] *Tawḥīd*, p. 33.
[337] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[338] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

(a) *The impossibility of the infinity of the small and the possibility of the infinity of the large*

If someone says: 'If you permit the survival (*baqā'*) of the substances in the hereafter by way of which they do not actually survive, why then do you not permit their pre-eternity (*qidamuhā*) by way of which their coming into existence is not preceded?', al-Māturīdī, would respond in this way:

To accept the coming into existence without being preceded by God, would be a paradox. Because the meaning of the coming into existence is being after it was nonbeing, while the meaning of survival (*baqā'*) is being in successive future time (*fi musta'nif al-waqt*) regardless of whether there is with it other than it or not. Therefore, the saying that the coming into existence is eternal in the sense that it has no beginning would be a paradox, while the idea of survival implies the beginning of existence which may continue forever. In fact, that the infinity of the large is possible is also confirmed by the Tradition (*Sam'*). Therefore, one is either to concede the affirmation of the Tradition that the substances are created or not. Then, if one chooses to deny that, his arguments are ultimately abrogated by the Tradition.

In addition, from mathematical multiplication we deduce that, if there is no starting point from which to begin, it is impossible for there ever to be any *ḥisāb* (calculus); but if there is a starting mathematical point, it is possible that it remains for ever, that it increases and increases infinitely. Furthermore, the mathematical starting points are always mentioned, whereas the ending points are never mentioned. On the basis of this assertion, the finite small, i.e., finite divisibility, and the infinite large, i.e., infinite addition, differ from each other.[339]

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[339] *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

(b) *The impossibility of temporal regress and the possibility of temporal progress*

If a thing, as al-Māturīdī believes, is not to become existent except through something other than it preceding it, which is the prerequisite for all things becoming through other than themselves (*aghyār*), the coming into existence of all the rest of existents cannot be but in that way, including, of course, time. On the other hand the reality of survival (*baqā'*) does not work that way. For example, "Don't you see," says al-Māturīdī elucidating this point, "that if one said to someone else: 'Do not eat anything until you eat something other than it' and if that were also the condition for every supposed other than it going backward, one would never start eating, whereas, if someone said: ' Whenever you eat a morsel, then eat another one,' one would remain eating for ever."[340]

Also, al-Māturīdī continues, if we imagine that there were no body at all and that it were possible that there existed an accident before an accident, there would be no existence of body at all. This is because the body would have no priority nor beginning, whereas it is possible for it to continue for ever without an end. And the same goes for the accidents. Similarly, for each motion and rest to which we point the end of the past of the kind, and it is therefore impossible that there be a finite past without its having a beginning.[341]

3. *Responses to the argument from the nature of motion and rest*

As we have said, al-Māturīdī does not explicitly state the proofs of the exponents of eternity which are based on the nature of motion and rest, but he does address Aristotle's assertion that there cannot be an absolute beginning of motion since if it had been possible, the world either (i) would have come into existence and begun to move, or (ii) the world would have existed in an eternal state of rest before beginning to move. Aristotle rules out both of these hypotheses on the ground that they assume the absurdity of regress *ad infinitum*. Therefore motion is eternal and so is rest.[342]

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[340] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[341] *Ibid.*

Al-Māturīdī's proofs of the origination of motion and rest are as follows:

(a) A body is either in motion or at rest. These two states, then, cannot be simultaneously in it. Therefore, out of the body's whole time, half of it is in motion and half of it is at rest; and every thing which is a half is finite. Therefore, if neither the motion nor the rest are simultaneous from eternity, both of them, then, must be originated, and, so, the impossibility of their being created from eternity, necessitates their being temporal. Out of this reasoning comes, he concludes, that motion and rest are accidental.[343]

(b) Similarly, each body is either at constant (*dā'im*) rest or in constant motion, or that which is made up of them is naturally driven to it, or is subjected by it for the benefits of other than it itself. Since that is the characteristic of the substances of the world which have no quality of life, it stands established that they are created. Because they (the substances) are not in the state in which they are by themselves, but they are in such a state for the sake of making them subject to and useful for the needs of other than them. Therefore, if that stands established regarding the origin of the substances, which permeates the living beings, and of which we approve and from which we benefit, it is, then, more appropriate for the living beings to be disposed to the needs and the benefits (of other than themselves). And from all of that he infers that motion and rest are originated and not eternal.[344]

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[342] Cf. Davidson, II, p. 6.

[343] *Tawḥīd*, p. 12.

(c) Furthermore, the world is eternally (*qadīman*) either in the states of integration or disintegration, in motion or at rest, evilness or goodness, and increase or decrease, and all of these states are known by both the senses and Reason to be originated. This is because two contraries cannot be combined, a fact which further affirms the mutual succession (*ta'āqub*) which is tantamount to being originated; and all originated things which are existent become so after being non-existent. The same goes for those elements which are bound to a particular existence and for those things which do not precede it.[345]

4. *Responses to the argument from the nature of potentiality*

(a) Some argue, al-Māturīdī observes, that existent things come into existence through the process of transition (*intiqāl*) from the potential into the actual. That being the case, he responds, the first existent would become other than it, and so this second is originated by virtue of its not being the first, and the first is originated by virtue of its being perished after its transition into the second. In addition, something does not come from something else on the notion of its being in the state of hiding (*mustajinnan*) and then appears (*fayaẓhar*); nor does it come in the way that there is such a creative force in it that it is self-generating (*yatawallad*) and thus comes out (into actual existence). Examples for this are the child and the thing put in a container. But it is impossible that there (in a mother and in a thing) be multiples of that which is there and of that which it is. Therefore, it is invalid to say that the man came from the sperm and the tree from the seed. On the basis of this same notion of hiding-and-appearing is the statement of those who believe in potential appearing (*al-burūz bi al-quwwah*). But in this case the thing is supposed to create itself because the force which makes it actual is other than that when it is in the state of potentiality. Or the process of the creation through transition operates in the way of the annihilation of the first, that is to say, there is an A, viz. sperm (*nuṭfah*) from which comes a B, viz. a vital breath (*nasamah*). In other words, this A disappears and of it no trace remains, and B is originated so that, again, no trace of A remains. In any case, both A and B are created.[346]

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[344] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 12–13.
[345] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

(b) An argument for the potentiality based on nourishment (*aghdhiyyah*) is also invalid, al-Māturīdī argues. For, there is a time when a creature reaches a certain magnitude which does not increase any more, while its nourishment by those atoms which increase the magnitude is the same as before. Moreover, there are many atoms which are meant to increase the magnitude of creatures and which some living beings eat all their life long, but which do not show up. For example, you see the mulberry tree whose leaves the camel eats, but the outcome of her eating is different from the outcome of others who eat the same leaves. This proves that the generation cannot be through the act of nourishment. Furthermore, food is inanimate stuff which could not become so without somebody who has arranged its nature to become that. All this, al-Māturīdī asserts, indicates the impossibility of the generation through the transition from the potentiality into the actuality.[347]

5. *Responses to the argument from the nature of causality*

We have already seen (cf. response No. 1) that al-Māturīdī does not mind calling God cause (*'illah*) if by that is meant that He created the world from non-existence. What al-Māturīdī cannot accept is the philosophical idea that the *'illah* (cause) must have an immediate *ma'lūl* (effect) which, in turn, entails the eternity of both the creator, God, and the creation, the world. His objection to this al-Māturīdī explains in this way:

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[346] *Ibid.*
[347] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

> We say that God is eternally knowing, powerful, acting, and magnanimous (*Jawād*) in such ways as are sound to Reason ... God is thus eternal in the sense that He by His act brings a thing into existence at its proper time and in the way by which it is correct to describe Him as having no need for creation (*takwīn*) and as being the Creator (*al-Bārī* ') in His self-sufficient existence, as well as to refrain from the notion that His ability to create was originated.[348]

From this passage it is clear, then, that al-Māturīdī objects to the natural causation and the Neo-Platonic emanation, and, instead, joins the majority of the Muslim theologians in their belief in continuous creation by God.

6. *Responses to the argument from the nature of the celestial spheres*

Having in his mind the proof of eternity from the nature of the celestial spheres which is based on the notion that there is no contrary motion to motion in a circle, al-Māturīdī develops his response in this way:

> We see by our own eyes that all substances (*jawāhir*) are of divergent dimensions (*mutafāwitah al-ḥudūd*). It is not possible for them to be so in any other way, except that they are so. Because of the least difference which appears to become most. It is established from this that

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[348] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

> it started from the smallest and then gained magnitude and density after it did not have them, and the fineness of its magnitude and density at the time of its coming into existence, after it was non-existent, was not because of anything preceding. This is because, in the preceding state all would be necessarily equal. But actual difference has been established. Therefore, it is proved that that which preceded is just its coming into existence after non-existence. Because that is just what it means. In addition, if its circular motion were made straight from one direction some would be on the heels of others. Thus, when some of them come into existence, the others would be annihilated. Hence, if motions were necessarily pre-eternal, their annihilation would also be so. Therefore, in pre-eternity they would be both non-existent and existent. This is a contradiction, because existence and annihilation cannot be both together in the same state. Therefore, they cannot be together in any state. This proves that they have the beginning. Additionally, if in actual visual experience the swift speed of one vanishes, the other would take the lead. And since they are going in a straight direction, it is impossible that the beginning of one of them not be before the beginning of the other, or that one of them be faster than the other. Now, in the elimination of a limit of them, the limit, then, is also voided. This voidance constitutes the rejection of the perceptual. Thence, a beginning for them has been established. Similarly, this argument applies to the circular motion.[349]

Although al-Māturīdī is more concise in his refutation of this argument than al-Ghazālī, the core of his ideas is not far from that of the latter. Both of them contend that there cannot be eternally equal motions of the spherical revolutions because of the impossibility that there be an actual infinity of time of different objects even if they be in the circular motion.[350]

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[349] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

7. *Responses to the dualistic argument from the nature of the mixture of good and bad*

Al-Māturīdī's *K. Tawḥīd* is full of different discussions about dualism and of his various responses to the variety of questions raised by the dualists. But the heart of his response, regarding the eternity of the world which is based on the notion of the nature of good and bad or light and darkness, lies in the fact of Islamic monotheism which vehemently objects to any possible idea of duality in divinity and so of the eternity of the origin of the world. In fact, al-Māturīdī thinks that Indo-Iranian dualism is the most groundless form of religion and the worst of all the arguments for the eternity of the world.[351]

We would like to bring here only two typical examples of the responses of al-Māturīdī to dualists:

(a) If the act of mixture of good and evil or light and darkness was originated after it was not in existence, then this act of mixture must have come either from one of them (good or evil; light or darkness) or from both of them. From this follows the possibility of origination of the act of mixture and so is the case with the whole. Or this mixture was originated by neither of them, a hypothesis which would entail the third factor for its coming into existence. Or the good and evil, light and darkness existed by themselves which, if they were thus, would necessarily abrogate the idea of their mutual difference (*tabāyun*); or the darkness stayed by itself so that there was no more appropriate time for it than a certain other time before it. Therefore, if nothing happened to two parts which did not mingle with each other, and they came into existence, why should not be the same case with the whole.[352]

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[350] Cf. Simon Van den Bergh, Averroe's *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, vols. i–ii, p. 9.

[351] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 34–37; 152–153; 175–172.

(b) Furthermore, if they render good and evil, light and darkness to be different in their nature, it is necessary that they render one of them to have the ability of mixture (*sha'nuhu al-imtizāj*) and the other the ability of discrepancy *(al-baynūnah*). That is to say, one of them has succeeded to be in the state it is. Then they say that once light and darkness are disintegrated, they can never be mingled with each other again. But how did they know this? For we know for sure that integration is not familiar to us, and how are we to know about disintegration by our effort? What made them, then, know that integration and disintegration is perpetual (*abadan*)? The same is in the case of pre-eternity. Therefore, the idea of light and darkness as two eternal origins of the world is invalid. That is to say, the world is not eternal, nor does it have two origins (good and evil or light and darkness), but was created by One Unique and Eternal Agent, i.e., God.[353]

Al-Māturīdī's foregoing responses may be outlined in this way:

1. The world is temporal
   - a) because it cannot be eternal
     - i) because only God is eternal
     - ii) He has eternal will and power to create
     - iii) He is the Prime Cause and needs no cause to act
   - b) because the observable parts of the world are

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[352] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[353] *Ibid.*, p. 161. More of al-Māturīdī's responses to the concept of dualism will be presented in the following section when we come to deal with the unity of God or Islamic monotheism.

    finite and so is the world as a whole.
  - c) because the world is constantly in different states of motion and rest, integration and disintegration, etc., which are known to be originated, so the world is originated too.
- 2. The world is created *ex nihilo*
  - a) because the creation from nothing is conceivable
    - i) because there are many things which we do not perceive by our senses and yet we approve of their existence.
    - ii) because if there were no starting point of the world, there would be no world at all since that which has no beginning, has no existence.
    - iii) because the concept of coming into existence through transition from the potential into the actual is incorrect because it fails to explain many different existing things from the same substratum of the potential.
    - iv) because the world is composed of divergent substances which must have been arranged by something prior to them in time, and so the substances themselves were caused to come into existence at a certain point in time and therefore are not eternal.

As for the philosophic proofs of eternity from the nature of the cause (God), there are mainly three of them which runs as follows. First, one makes the assumption that (a) there could be no moment more preferable to the Cause to create the world than some other moment in time before or after a certain moment (because, if it were, the Cause must have had the cause to act at that certain point in time and not before or after; and in that case, we would have an infinitude of causes which is absurd). Therefore (b), the cause of the world must be unchangeable, i.e., Aristotle's unmoved mover. Moreover, one assumes (c) the eternal attributes of the cause which are inseparable from the notion of the eternity of the world, such as, the eternal attribute of the power of creating and the like.[354]

It can be well expected that al-Māturīdī's response to all of these three proofs is grounded in the firm Islamic theological doctrine of God's absolute volition which does not require any determinant, and which cannot be measured by the human standards of the inseparability of cause and effect. The glimpses of this response have already appeared in our foregoing discussions (al-Māturīdī's responses No. 5), and we will see more of it when we come to talk about the essence and attributes of God in our next section of this chapter.

Now before our conclusion of this section, dealing with the question of the world, we should not forget to say a few words about al-Māturīdī's understanding of the purpose of the creation of the world. In fact, al-Māturīdī has devoted a special section (pp. 96-101) of his *K. Tawḥīd* to the question: *limā khalaqa Allah al-khalqa* (why did God create the creation)?

In discussing this question, al-Māturīdī first observes that some regarded this very question as inappropriate (*fāsid*) because God, who is wise, knowing and self-sufficient, cannot be asked such a question for the simple reason that it is impossible that His act exceeds wisdom (*ḥikmah*). For, if His act were not in accord with wisdom, He would be ignorant. But since He is knowing, not ignorant, and self-sufficient, not in need of any benefit from any thing for Himself, it is not conceivable that His act be not in accord with wisdom. Therefore, the question *"limā "* itself has no wisdom; and therefore God Himself has denied the slightest idea of His act having the purpose of play, saying: "*Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between.*"[355] and then "*He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs).*"[356]

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[354] Davidson, III, p. 1.

[355] Qur'ān: 21:16 .

[356] *Ibid.*, 21:23; Cf. *Tawḥīd*, pp. 96–97.

Then al-Māturīdī mentions that some of the Mu'tazilites answered this question by their concept of *al-aṣlaḥ* (the most salutary) which says:

> God saw it the most suitable and so He did it. Therefore, he cannot be questioned for His most suitable act.[357]

Thereupon al-Māturīdī says:

> This statement of *al-aṣlaḥ* means nothing more than the idea of wisdom. In fact, the latter is more preferable. If, however, something other than wisdom is meant by it, then the statement of the idea of *al-aṣlaḥ* is similar to that of *limā fa'ala* (why did He do). In addition to that, the concept of *al-aṣlaḥ* implies the question of the condition for the most suitable act, i.e., on what basis it should be the way it is ...? Because there is nothing which is a condition for the *aṣlaḥ* that cannot be at the same time a condition for corruption (*fasād*); and in that is the biggest corruption of all. On the other hand, there is nothing which is wisdom that can be foolishness (*safah*). For, according to their interpretation of the *aṣlaḥ,* it is meant to be the most suitable to the other than Him although it sometimes may mean corruption. The interpretation of wisdom, however, means correctness in the sense of putting everything in its proper place which, in fact, means justice from which His act does not exceed. Furthermore, God is creator in His essence which is the attribute of praise and majesty. Therefore, it is absurd that God has earned that from among other than Him because that would assume that in it there is a benefit for Him and the one who is described as deriving benefit is needful. But since God is the creator in His essence, it is impossible that He be no

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[357] *Ibid.*

> creator at all. Therefore the question "*limā*" is absurd in the same way as are the questions: *limā qadara* (why is He powerful)? *limā 'alima* (why does He know)?, and the like.[358]

About the difference between al-Māturīdī's concept of wisdom and the Mu'tazilites' concept of the most salutary, as well as about the relative problems to this question, such as, the problems of *wa'd* and *wa'īd* (promise and threat) and the ethical grounds of *al-amr wa al-nahy* (enjoining good and forbidding evil), we will speak in more detail within our discussion of the problem of man's Free Will and Predestination.

In concluding the present discussion, we would like to point out that in this section we have tried to show al-Māturīdī's thought about the problem of the creation of the world, creation *ex nihilo*, and the purpose of God's creation of the creatures, without a detailed comparison of this thought to other Muslim theologians of his time nor to those of later times. The reason for this lies in the fact that during our study of al-Māturīdī we found that because of the often unwarranted comparison of his ideas to those of others, his original intents were misread and so misunderstood. Of course, al-Māturīdī's frequent philosophical considerations and his genuine defense of the Islamic doctrine of creation deserves a more thorough comparative study which, I am sure, would reveal many new points not only regarding the early Muslim philosophy, but also concerning the organic connection of the Muslim orthodox theology with philosophy. Such a comparative study remains, however, outside the scope of the present work.

Theme Two—*God*

We know that the world exists because we see it with our eyes and we perceive it with the rest of our senses. However, we do not see God. So the question is: Does God exist? "Yes, God does exist," al-Māturīdī would answer, and, he would prove that by the fact of the world's existence which must have been created by an agent and by the current laws which govern its continuous existence.

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[358] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

> Then the proof (*al-dalīl*), al-Māturīdī proclaims, that the world has an Originator lies in the fact that it must have been originated, as we have already explained, and in the fact that there is nothing in the present world which is integrated or disintegrated by itself, but rather by something other than itself.[359]

In order that this claim be fully admitted, however, the evidence for the existence of the Creator of the universe, i.e., God, must be further investigated and presented in such a way as to repel the denials of the atheists, to eliminate the doubts of the skeptics, and to strengthen the persuasion of the theists. Additionally, the nature of God's essence also should be explained as fully and as adequately as is humanly possible without associating anything that could profane its reality, and God's attributes should be presented in a way that is fully compatible with His essence as well. In this section of the present chapter, then, we will deal with these two main issues concerning God, viz., God's Existence, and His Attributes as they are understood and presented by al-Māturīdī in his *K. Tawḥīd.*

(a) *Existence*

Technically speaking there are three major theological or philosophical methods for proving the existence of a Creator of the universe or simply the existence of a theistic God. These methods are known in theologico-philosophical literature as the Cosmological, the Teleological, and the Ontological Arguments. Furthermore, as William Rowe explains:

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[359] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

> Arguments for the existence of God are commonly divided into *a posteriori* and *a priori* arguments. An *a posteriori* argument depends on a principle or premise that can be known only by means of our experience of the world ... An *a priori* argument, on the other hand, purports to rest on principles all of which can be known independently of our experience of the world, by just reflecting on and understanding them. Of the three major theistic arguments — the Cosmological, Teleological, and Ontological — only the last is *a priori* argument; the Cosmological Argument and the Teleological Argument are *a posteriori* arguments.[360]

In the same way as Ibn Khaldūn has distinguished between the philosophical and theological inquiry, i.e., the former having the interest in absolute existence as such, and the latter putting the emphasis on the creator of that existence, a distinction between the philosophical method of inquiry into the existence of God and that of the theological may be made as well. Thus, the Muslim philosophical arguments for the existence of God are chiefly Ontological, while the theological ones are mainly Cosmological and Teleological. And, as Rowe explains again:

> Among the differences between the two *a posteriori* arguments, the Cosmological and the Teleological, three are worth noting. First, the fact about the world from which the Teleological Argument begins is vastly more complicated and, therefore, more difficult to establish by experience than is the fact from which the Cosmological Argument proceeds ... Second, the Teleological Argument is an inductive argument; its premises, if true, may lend considerable support to its

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[360] See, William L. Rowe, *The Cosmological Argument*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1975), p. 3.

> conclusion, but do not demonstrate or establish its truth. The Cosmological Argument, on the other hand, is a deductive argument; its premises, if true, may establish the truth of its conclusion. Finally, the Teleological Argument does not purport to be a complete argument for the existence of the theistic God ... The Cosmological Argument, however, like the Ontological Argument, purports to be a complete argument for the existence of the theistic God; it purports to establish the existence of a being and its possession of the attributes omnipotence, omniscience, goodness, etc. commonly associated with the theistic concept of God.[361]

Al-Māturīdī's arguments for the existence of God are by and large Cosmological; they are Teleological only as he attempts on occasion to establish the fact that the components of the world are made in such a way as to serve a certain end of the world as a whole, i.e., they are machine-like, and that the world as a whole is designed according to the divine wisdom which is not always obvious to us; they are in no wise Ontological. Historically, the Cosmological Argument started with Plato and Aristotle, was taken over by the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish theologians and especially developed during the Middle Ages.[362] This argument is also known as natural theology; it underwent a severe criticism by David Hume (d. 1776)[363] and Immanuel Kant (d. 1804);[364] but its revaluation is re-emerging in some modern works.[365]

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[361] *Ibid*, pp. 4–5.

[362] For more on the history of the Cosmological Argument see, R. L. Sturch, "The Cosmological Argument" (Ph. D. thesis, Oxford University, 1972); William L. Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*, (The Macmillan Press LTD, London, 1980). For more on the pros and cons of the Cosmological Argument see, Bruce Reichenbach, *The Cosmological Argument: A Reassessment*, (Charles C Yhomes Publisher, Springfield, 1972); on the *Kalām* Cosmological Argument in particular see, A. J. Wensinck, "Les preuves de l'Existence de Dieu dans la Théologie Musulmane" in *Koniklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Deel 81, Serie *A*, pp. 1–27; William L. Craig, *The Kalām Cosmological Argument*, (The Macmillan Press LTD., London, 1979);

Al-Māturīdī's Cosmological Argument, as we shall see, seeks to establish a Creator of the world or Necessary Being rather than theistic God. About the specific characteristics of the theistic God al-Māturīdī will talk, though, in his discussion about God's Attributes. The following are some of his most conspicuous Cosmological Arguments:

> [1] The world contains animate and inanimate beings. Every animate being, while in the stage of its full power and perfection, is ignorant about its beginning, and is incapable of either creating its equivalent or remedying its corruption. Therefore, it stands established that the animate being is created by another being than itself; the inanimate is, then, *a fortiori* so.
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> [2] Every substance of the world is liable by virtue of compulsion (*qahran*) to accidents. Accidents which a substance receives cannot exist on their own, and there is no existence for the substance without the accidents either. Therefore, it stands established that they are dependent on each other; and whatever is dependent for its existence on anything other than itself cannot be by itself but by another being.
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> [3] Since every substance is composed of contrary

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[363] Cf. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, (Bobbs-Merril Educational Publishing, Indianapolis, 1970).

[364] Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans., Max Müller, (Anchor Books, New York, 1966), pp. 348–366.

[365] Cf. Pierre Duhem, *Medieval Cosmology: Theories of Infinity, Place, Time, Void, and the Plurality of Worlds*, ed. and trans., by Roger Ariew, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985); John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1986).

natures whose nature is mutual repulsion, it is impossible that it be integrated by itself. It is proved, then, that it ought to have a composer.

[4] Every substance is dependent on another than itself to maintain its continued existence in terms of its nourishment and other things because it is beyond the substance's reach to know the way by which to continue its existence and how it is supposed to derive and acquire that. Therefore, it stands established that (the substance's existence) is not by itself but by an all-knowing and wise being.

[5] If (the world) came into existence by itself, it would continue also by itself which would mean that (its coming into existence and continuous existence) are on the same level (*'alā ḥaddin wāḥid*). But since it does not possess that, it is proved that it is by another being than itself.

[6] If (the world) came into existence by itself, it would be assumed that it has come into existence either after existence, but this is impossible because it was brought into existence by a being other than itself, or before it, but how is it possible that that which is before existence brings itself into existence? This is because, if it were existent by itself before existence, this would suggest that it had been non-existent; but it was active in its non-existence, which is absurd. A testimony to what we have just said are building, writing, and ships. For they can come into existence only through an existent agent, a similar procedure of which must be applied to this of which we are speaking here.[366]

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[366] It is interesting to note that H. Davidson although not including al-Māturīdī among the main Muslim *Mutakallims* whom he chose to represent Islamic theology in his study, while speaking about *Arguments from the Concept of Particularization* (Chapter VI) and

> [7] If it is permissible that the world should have begun by itself in its entirety, it would have been permissible that it passes by itself in its entirety. But since this is not the case, meaning that the world is perpetually in different states in the sense of its objects being now living beings and then dead, disintegrated and then becoming integrated, small and then becoming bigger, and evil and then become good, it is impossible that it had come into existence by itself but had been rather originated by a being other than itself. This being the case with its parts, the same must hold true of the whole, that is, it cannot but come into existence by another than itself. For, if it were permissible (for the world to come into existence by itself), it would be permissible for the colors of clothes to be changed by themselves and not by dying, or for the ship to become what it is by itself. But since that is not so, it follows necessarily that these things are made by a knowing and powerful agent, and so is the case with this about which we are talking here.[367]

It is obvious that the above mentioned arguments are *a posteriori* and Cosmological Arguments, meaning that all of them are known through our direct experience of the world. In addition to that, we find in *K. Tawḥīd* arguments which also rest on certain facts of the world, but which involve an *a priori* premise as well, that is to say, they can be known independently of our experience of the world. Two examples of these arguments are the most conspicuous:

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in comparison to Saadia, remarks: "Māturīdī (d. 944) speaks more directly and clearly (about particularization). **Building, writing, and ships,** he writes, **testify to what we have said. For they can come into existence only through an existent agent, and the present instance, the world's coming into existence in its entirety, must be similar** (our emphasis)." Davidson, VI, p. 2.

[367] The reference to all of the above specimens is: *Tawḥīd*, pp. 17–19.

(1) the argument based on the concept of particularization,[368] and (2) the Teleological Argument:

> [1] If the world had come into existence by itself, there would have been no time more appropriate for its existence than a certain other time, nor would there have been a state more proper than a certain other state, nor would there have been a characteristic (or quality) more suitable than a certain other characteristic (or quality). But since the world's existence has different times, states, and characteristics, it stands established that its coming into existence was not by itself. For, if it had been permissible for the world to create every thing for itself by itself, the world would have created the best states and characteristics which would have, in turn, eliminated all the evil and ugly things. Therefore, the existence of these things is proof for its coming into existence by a being other than itself.[369]
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> [2] Also, that the world did not come into existence by itself is shown by the fact that nothing in it is lacking a wondrous wisdom and a marvelous signification which the sages are incapable of grasping as to its essence (*mā'iyyatuhu*) and the manner of its coming out as it does come out. In fact, every one of them (sages) is aware of the deficiency of his wisdom and knowledge in grasping the true nature of that. Therefore, this necessary fact and other facts are proof of the wisdom of the world's Originator and Creator.[370]

Al-Māturīdī's foregoing arguments may be outlined in this way:

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[368] The concept of particularization was to become known in Islamic literature under the name of *takhṣīṣ*. For more on this see, Herbert A. Davidson, "Arguments from the Concept of Particularization in Arabic Philosophy" in *Philosophy East and West*, XVII, 1968, pp. 299–314.

[369] *Tawḥīd*, p. 18.

[370] *Ibid.*

There must be a Creator of the world or the Necessary Being

- **a)** because the world could not have come into existence by itself
  - (i) because animate beings cannot create themselves nor can they remedy their corruption
  - (ii) because substances depend on accidents and accidents cannot exist on their own
  - (iii) because substances are composed of contrary natures
  - (iv) because the continued existence of substances is dependent on things other than itself
  - (v) because the world cannot maintain its existence by itself
  - (vi) because of the absurdity of the simultaneousness of existence and non-existence.
  - (vii) because of the fact that what is true for the parts must be true for the whole
  - (ix) because of the diversity of the world's times, states, and characteristics
- **b)** because the world must have been created by a wise Creator
  - (i) because every thing in the world has a definite purpose.

(b) *Attributes*

Once we know that there must be a Creator of the universe, it naturally follows that we should be interested in determining the true nature of that Creator or, to put it in a more theological sense, God. For our understanding of the essential and positive attributes of God depends on our comprehension of His relationship to both the world and man and vice versa. Al-Māturīdī's first task, in this regard, seems to be to find out the technique by which God's somethingness may be affirmed as opposed to His nothingness. In other words, if someone poses the question as to whether

God is something or nothing in terms of the usage of language and in terms of His reality, what will be the appropriate answer to it? Al-Māturīdī has two ways to the solution of this problem: one which might be characterized as negative and the other as positive.

By the negative way we mean al-Māturīdī's objection to the application of the term *jism* (body) to God. His reasons for that are that the term *jism* denotes that which has directions, limits and three dimensions;[371] that God is not called in the Scripture by that name; and that the term *jism* is not applied to the affirmation of other notions either, such as, accidents and attributes, despite the fact that physical accidents or attributes do directly imply being.[372] Additionally, it is impossible that God be conceived in terms of the notion of *jism*. For, if it were possible that God be conceived of any sort of sculpture (*naḥt*)— not mentioning the fact that there is neither the perceptual, nor traditional, nor rational proof for that — it would be, then, possible that God be conceived as *al-jasad* (the corporeal body) and *al-shakhṣ* (the figure), and as all of the rest of the creaturely characteristics as well. But this is known to be incorrect (*fāsid*).[373]

As for the positive way, we mean by it al-Māturīdī's ontological and semantic explanation of God's absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-mujarrad*). In other words, it cannot be said that God is nothing (*lā shay'*)because that would be tantamount to the denial of His existence; and God cannot be called body (*jism*) because that would mean that He is confined to certain dimensions and directions and is liable to limits and accidents.[374] Therefore, God is something (*shay'*) in the sense of His absolute existence (*wujūd*); and He is 'something not like anything else' (*shay' lā ka al-*

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[371] Cf. *supra.*

[372] *Tawḥīd*, p. 38.

[373] *Ibid.*

[374] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

ashyā') in the sense of the affirmation (*ithbāt*) of His being something as opposed to His being nothing or corporeal, the meaning of the last of which would be necessarily implied in the formula 'a body not like any other body' (*jism lā ka al-ajsām*).

That the term *shay'* (something or entity, i.e., God 'is') is applicable to the definition of God in terms of both His necessary existence and the semantic alternative, al-Māturīdī contends, can be substantiated by both Tradition and Reason. Thus he explains:

> The proof that the term *shay'* can be applied (to express God's existence) is two-fold. One of these proofs is found in the Tradition (*Sama'*) which reads: "He resembles none of the (created) things" (ليس كمثله شئ).[375] So if God were not something, His resemblance to the thingness of the (created) things would be not denied by the term somethingness (*al-shay'iyyah*). For in reality the something is the opposite to that which cannot be something. Similarly, "Say: What is the greatest testimony? Say: God is (the greatest) witness" (قل اي شئ اكبر شهادة قل الله شهيد).[376] So if the term something were not to be applied to God, it would be impossible that it be implied in this statement to the extent that it is related to Him.
>
> And the other proof is found in Reason. That is to say, the somethingness in the customary usage is used for nothing more than to express the affirmation (*ism al-ithbāt*). For, the saying '*bilā shay'*' (nothing) expresses a denial if it is not meant to express diminution (*taṣghīr*). Therefore, it stands established that (the term something) signifies the affirmation and avoids the *ta'ṭīl* (denying God all attributes). But if some people are not aware of the fact that the term *shay'* only signifies the

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[375] Qur'ān: 42:11.

[376] *Ibid.*, 6:19.

> affirmation and avoids the *ta'ṭīl*, they are excused from not applying it as they are afraid of conceiving of something of God in their hearts which is detestable. Instead, they apply the term *hastiyyah* (lit. external existence) which is clearer in expressing the affirmation although it is the same as the term *shay'* is understood among the people of this language.[377]
>
> Furthermore, in common speech (*fī al-shāhid*) by the expression: "man is something" one does not understand man's essence *per se* (*mā'iyyat al-dhāt*), nor does one understand his quality when it is said: "man is knowing (*'ālim*) and able (*qādir*)." What is understood, however, is both his abstract and concrete existence (*wujūd wa hastiyyah*), in the first instance, and his being described by such qualities, in the second instance. Hence, the term *shay'* is not meant to explain the essence *per se* of man as that essence is explained by the expression: "man is body," meaning that he possesses certain dimensions and directions, and is susceptible to limits and accidents. The same goes for the rest of the human beings and substances.[378]

From the above discussion we may draw three important conclusions. First, from al-Māturīdī's contention that the term *jism* cannot be applied to express God's absolute being because of its corporeal denotations, we discern his rejection of and response to Anthropomorphism or corporealism (*tashbīh* or *tajsīm*) which had already crept into some theological Muslim circles of his time. To have a better understanding of this point, we should remind ourselves of the fact that in the early history of Islamic theological thought, i.e., the period which I chose to call the stage of faithful obedience (*ṭā'ah*), this problem of *tashbīh*, which was perforce in the Muslim mind because of the indication of some of the Qur'ānic verses that God has a hand (*yadu'llah*), a face (*wajhu'llah*), and the like, was solved by the formula of non-commission (*bilā kayf*). That is to say, the ambiguous verses (*al-āyāt al-mutashābihah*), as opposed to the unambiguous or clear ones (*āyāt muḥkamāt*), were taken by the early orthodox Muslim generations in their literal form without any further examination of their possible explicit or implicit meanings. However, due to different factors that influenced Islamic cultural development — those which may be related to the early internal political upheavals and those which may be sought in the external influences that came either through contact with Greek philosophy or through the impact of neophytes of different backgrounds — the problem of both the concept and terminology of God's essence and attributes had arisen. So, although the *bilā kayf* approach — which was officially initiated by Imām Mālik, forcefully advocated by Imām Ibn Ḥanbal, ambiguously adopted by al-Ash'arī, and ultimately implied by al-Māturīdī — was meant to discourage orthodox Muslims from discussion about the difficult theological points of *tashbīh* which could lead one to unacceptable Anthropomorphism, the discussion seems to have been unceasingly going on throughout the long history of Islamic theological thought. In fact, this discussion was imposed upon the orthodox by the fact that some Muslim groups went too far in their anthropomorphization of God — indeed, so far that their views lost any sense of Islamic monotheism. Three such extreme anthropomorphic groups may be mentioned here: (1) a group of Traditionalists, the *Ḥashawiyyah*;[379] (2) a Shi'ite group of the *Hishāmiyyah*;[380]

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[377] *Tawḥīd*, p. 41.

[378] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

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[379] Cf. *Milal*, pp. 127–144; trans., Kazi and Flynn, pp. 88–97; For more on the history and doctrine of the *Ḥashawiyyah* see, A. S. Halkin, "The Ḥashawiyyah" in *JAOS*, vol. 54, 1934, pp. 1–18.

[380] For more on the Shi'ite heterodoxies see, Israel Friedlaeder, "The Heterodoxies of the Shi'ites in the Presentation of Ibn Ḥazm" in *JAOS*, vol. 28, pp. 1–80; and "Commentary", vol. 28, pp. 1–183.

and (3) the group of the Karrāmites, especially the later ones among them.[381] To have some sense of their common anthropomorphic views, it suffices to cite here this report of al-Shahrastānī on the Anthropomorphists which reads:

> According to them God has a form and possesses limbs and parts which are either spiritual or physical. It is possible for him to move from place to place, to descend and ascend, to be stationary and to be firmly seated.[382]

It is clear, then, that al-Māturīdī, when rejecting the term *jism* as a description of the entity of God, was addressing his response to these anthropomorphic groups who apparently exceeded the limit of the right-positive approach to God and thus severely violated the true essence of monotheism. Therefore, he saw it necessary to clarify the orthodox position regarding this issue which he did by explaining what God "is not" before he went on to say what God truly "is."

Our second conclusion is that al-Māturīdī's adoption of the term *shay'* to express the entity of God was meant to refute the views of those who, while rightly rejecting crass anthropomorphism, went to the other pole of denying all attributes of God (*ta'ṭīl*), a concept which was apparently initiated by Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746), adopted by the Mu'tazilites, and elaborated by the Muslim philosophers. Thus, according to al-Baghdādī, Jahm said :

> I do not describe God by that which is possible to be applied to other than Him, such as the description of Him being an existing thing, living, knowing and willing. But he described Him as being powerful, Originator, Agent, Creator, Giver of life and death because these attributes are only specific to Him.[383]

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[381] Cf. *Milal*, p. 145; trans., p. 92.

[382] *Ibid.*, p. 139; trans., p. 89.

[383] *Farq*, p. 199.

And from al-Shahrastānī we have this report on Jahm's view regarding God's attributes:

> It is not lawful to apply to God an attribute which is also applicable to creatures, because this would imply likeness between God and creatures. He (Jahm), therefore, denied that God is living and knowing, but maintained that He is powerful, Agent, and Creator, because to no creature can be attributed power, action and creation.[384]

As for the approach of the Mu'tazilites to the attributes of God, al-Shahrastānī reported that:

> The Mu'tazila deny altogether the eternal attributes. According to them God is 'knowing' by his essence, 'powerful' by his essence, 'living' by his essence: not by 'knowledge' or 'power' or 'life' considered as eternal attributes or entities, (*ma'ānī*), subsisting in him. This is because if the attributes shared in the eternity of God, which is his special characteristic, they would also share in his godhead.[385]

Finally, the Muslim philosophic approach to this issue may be represented by the view of al-Fārābī who says:

> This necessarily entails also (i.e, that the First Existent is not divisible) that it has no magnitude and is absolutely incorporeal. Hence it is also one in this respect, because one of the meanings denoted by 'one' is 'the indivisible'. For whatever is indivisible in one respect is one in that respect in which it is indivisible. If it is indivisible in its action, it is one in that respect; if it is

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[384] *Milal*, p. 109; trans., p. 73.

[385] *Ibid.*, p. 55; trans., pp. 41–42.

> indivisible in its quality, it is one according to its quality. But what is indivisible in its substance is one with regard to its substance.[386]

Besides the above mentioned contention of al-Māturīdī that the term *shay'* is applicable to the Necessary First description of God, he has also three typical responses to the Jahmite-Mu‘tazilite doctrine of *ta‘ṭīl* (denying all attributes of God). First, al-Māturīdī argues that the denial of all attributes of God (*ta‘ṭīl*) is, in effect, also a sort of Anthropomorphism in the sense of having God resemble those things which have no names. Therefore God must be called by the names He called Himself by as well as be described by the attributes He described Himself by.[387] Second, that the correspondence in terminology does not necessitate the likeness between two equally named things because sometimes a term is used to express the denial of that correspondence, e.g., 'a man is unique in his time' means that he is different from all other men at the time. So, if the name were to mean the agreement between two equally named things, it would be impossible that a name be used with the intent precisely of the denial of that agreement. Thus, for example, we find terms like '*islām* ' and '*kufr* ' sharing the nominal expression, but the actual meaning of them is contradictory.[388]

The third point of al-Māturīdī against the concept of *ta‘ṭīl* is that the profession of *tawḥīd* (monotheism) necessarily starts with a certain amount of *tashbīh* (likening) whose ultimate goal, however, is pure *tawḥīd*. For, through the intelligible which is conceivable is signified the intelligible which our minds are short of reaching, such as the concept of the reward in the hereafter, which is described in terms of the pleasures of this world, the punishment in the hereafter, which is described in terms of the sufferings of this world. In the same manner we should understand the attributes of God which, it is true, are derived from the available human terms but whose ultimate goal is the understanding of the reality of God because the abstinence from that would be *ta'ṭīl*.[389] In fact, the way of describing God is not that of opposition (*mu'āraḍah*), in the sense that we may bring God and compare Him to His opposites, but rather it is the way of arbitration (*muḥākamah*) for which the Scripture must be the primary guide.[390]

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[386] See, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' Arā' Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*, edited and translated by Richard Walzer, *al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, (Oxford, 1985), p. 69.

[387] *Tawḥīd*, p. 44.

[388] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Finally, our third conclusion is that in al-Māturīdī's discussion about the somethingness (*shay'iyyah*) of God or the first necessary being we can recognize the concepts of *mawjūd* (pl. *mawjūdāt*), *wujūd*, *wājib al-wujūd*, *al-wājib bi-dhātihi* of the philosophers[391] and of the later theologians[392] as the methods of the two coalesced. The primary aim of this discussion was to make a conceptual distinction between non-existence (*'adam*) and existence (*wujūd*) and then to explain the meaning of the absolute existence (of God) and the relative existence (of the phenomenal objects). In the discussion of al-Māturīdī it is to be noted that both the technical and conceptual explanation of the entity of God are still in the rudimentary, elucidative (*bayān*) stage, an approach which he inherited from his Ḥanafī background, but also that his attempt in this regard is headed toward a more expansive rational method with recognizable traits of the definite orthodox concept of *tanzīh* (disassociating God from both the extreme positive and negative attributes). Thus, by denouncing the one pole of the concept of *tashbīh* of the Anthropomorphists and by refuting the other pole of the concept of *ta'ṭīl* of the Mu'tazilites and the philosophers, al-Māturīdī paved the way for the *tertium quid*, i.e., the orthodox alternative of the concept of *tanzīh*. This last point leads us to a further conclusion, namely, that al-Māturīdī is an advocate of the attributes of God in terms of both the appropriate conceptual and terminological sense, a conclusion which gives us the permission to examine in more detail these attributes of God as conceived by him.

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[389] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[390] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[391] Cf. al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*; Arthur J. Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology*, (London, 1951).

[392] Cf. al-Baqillānī (d. 403 H.), *Tamhīd*, p. 16; al-Shahrastānī (d. 548 H.), *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, pp. 8–9; al-Rāzī (d. 606 H.), *K. al-Arba'īn*, pp. 64–86; *Muḥaṣṣal*, pp. 65–70; al-Āmidī (d. 671 H.), *Ghāyat al-Marām*, pp. 7–25; Shaikh Zādah; *Naẓm*, pp. 3–5.

But before we come to the treatment of this, a general classification of the attributes of God, as perceived by the *Mutakallims*, would be most helpful. It ranges from the two-fold classification of al-Juwainī who divides God's attributes into *al-ṣifāt al-nafsiyyah* (God's attributes in virtue of Himself) and *al-ṣifāt al-ma'nawiyyah* (God's attributes as affirmative judgements);[393] to the threefold classification of al-Māturīdī who divides the attributes into those names of God by which we call Him and which are other than Himself (*wa hunna aghyār*), those which pertain to His essence (*dhāt*) and of which men are short of conceiving except in the way they are given by God, and, finally, those attributes which come from the proper derivation (*ishtiqāq*) and which are so because in reality there is no other alternative by means of which His essential attributes could be grasped;[394] and, finally, to the fourfold classification of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Muḥy al-Dīn Muḥammad who divides the attributes of God into four kinds. First, the attribute which signifies the absolute being of God (*mujarrad al-dhāt*), namely, He is existent (*al-mawjūd*). Second, the attributes which signify His essence and necessarily denote the negative aspect of it, such as, His being eternal *a parte ante* (*al-qadīm*) denotes that His existence is not preceded by non-existence (*al-'adam*); His being eternal *a parte post* (*al-bāqī*) denotes that non-existence will never befall Him; His being One (*al-wāḥid*) denotes that He has no associate (*al-sharīk*); and His being self-sufficient (*al-ghanī*) denotes that He is not dependent on anything (*al-muḥtāj*). Third, the attributes which signify God's essence and are superadded (*zā'idah*) to it, such as, the attributes of Him being living (*al-ḥayy*), speaking (*al-mutakallim*), omnipotent (*al-qādir*), willing (*al-murīd*), hearing (*al-samī'*), seeing (*al-baṣīr*), and omniscient (*al-'alīm*). Finally, the forth kind of the attributes are those which signify the essence of God with the addition of His actions (*al-af'āl*), such as, the attributes of Him being the Creator (*al-khāliq*), the Provider (*al-rāziq*), the Giver of life (*al-muḥyī*), the Giver of death (*al-mumīt*) and the like.[395]

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[393] *Irshād*, p. 30.
[394] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 65–66.

It is not difficult to notice that al-Māturīdī's discussion about the somethingness of God is identical with the first kind of this last 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's classification; that his first division is assumed in the third kind of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's classification; that his second division matches 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's second kind; and that his third division corresponds to the fourth kind of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's classification. Hence, it appears that the attributes of God, according to al-Māturīdī, may be divided into three basic classes: (1) essential (*al-ṣifāt al-dhātiyyah*), (2) positive (*al-ṣifāt al-thubūtiyyah*), and (3) active or creative attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-fi'liyyah*).

1. *Positive attributes*

We have already tried to expound al-Māturīdī's concept of God's absolute being (*wujūd*) and, as we were dealing in the second chapter with the creation of the world and creation *ex nihilo* as well as with the existence of God in this chapter, we have frequently talked about al-Māturīdī's concept of God's essential attributes of eternity *a parte ante* (*qidam*), eternity *a parte post* (*baqā'*), self-sufficiency (*ghinā* or *qiyām binafsihi*), and uniqueness (*mukhālafah li al-ḥawādith*), since all of these attributes are organically interwoven in the concept of God as the Prime Cause and the world as the creation of God. So, it can be seen that only one of the positive attributes of God remains to be examined here in more detail, i.e., the attribute of the Oneness of God (*waḥdaniyyah*), which represents the essence of Islamic monotheism.

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[395] See, Ibn al-Humām (d. 761 h.), *al-Musāyarah fi 'Ilm al-Kalām wa al-'Aqā'id al-Tawḥīdiyyah al-Munjiyah fi al-Ākhirah*, edition and connotation by 'Abd al-Ḥāmid Muḥy al-Dīn Muḥammad, (Cairo, 1348/1929), p. 37, n. 1.

Al-Māturīdī recognizes that there are different approaches to the idea of monotheism, such as philosophic, dualistic, the approach of non-Islamic religions, Islamic orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Naturally, to al-Māturīdī the Islamic orthodoxy is the only legitimate approach as we shall see. Let us now first hear what he has to say about these different *ṭuruq al-tawḥīd* (the approaches to monotheism) and then see his responses to them and his arguments for the Islamic orthodox view in this respect.

> Then, said the jurist Abū Manṣūr may God have mercy on him, there are several approaches (*ṭuruq*) to *tawḥīd* (monotheism). The first of them is that of the materialist philosophers (*ahl al-dahr*) who, with all other differences among them, have agreed on the idea of one principle (*wāḥid bādi'*), namely, the eternity of matter (*ṭīnah aw hayūlā*) which was (in the beginning) one until it was exposed to accidents and thus its previous state (*ḥāl*) was changed into the second one.
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> The view of the dualists is that the wise, the merciful, the knowing is one, and that the concept (*ma'nā*) of the other is not in the sense of divinity (*rubūbiyyah*), but in the sense of the opposite notion to it (one) because this second is all foolish and evil ...

> The people of the religions (*ahl al-adyān*) also affirm the eternity of the one until some of them came up with the idea of incarnation (*tajassum*) and some others said that he has a son …
>
> All people of speculation approve monotheism in its totality, but then each group of them, except the people of Islām, completely contradict that by way of interpretation. Thus, for example, some philosophers maintain the existence of both the Creator (al-Bārī') and His eternity, but state that all the substances are coeternal with Him, which is tantamount to the denial of monotheism; and some of them render the matter to be 'one,' but then it was annihilated through the process of transition and annihilation from which numberless things came into existence. As for the dualists, they entertain the idea of 'one' in the sense of it being *wāḥid al-jins* (one in genus) whereby they render all the good parts to belong to it. This is the view of the Manicheans among the Zanādiqah and the Magi who, by maintaining that view, distorted the meaning of the one because it implies the idea of body from which become many. Concerning the Jews, they apply to it (one) the likening of the creature, a view which entails a multiple number of many to the extent that it contains the possibility of the son. The Christians also maintain the existence of 'one' in which subsist three *hypostases* (*al-qanūmāt*) denying the partiality and dimension of any of them. They also entertain that (the one) was incorporeal and then became corporeal, while it is known that the corporeal is a form which is divisible and partible.[396]

Al-Māturīdī's more detailed responses to the philosophical views concerning the doctrine of monotheism are discernible from his refutation of the philosophers' doctrine of the eternity of the world which has been already presented in chapter two, and which there is no need to repeat here. His refutation of dualism and the Christian Trinity, however, deserve our additional attention because of the fact that al-Māturīdī deals with both of them a great deal. As for al-Māturīdī's treatment of Judaism, it is very minimal, a fact which indicates that he was either unfamiliar with it or that the presence of Judaism was not visible enough at the time in Transoxania to require special attention on his part.

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[396] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 118–120.

Regarding the dualists, all of whom maintain the idea of two basic origins of the world be that either in the sense of light and darkness or good and evil, al-Māturīdī deals especially with four groups of them, namely, the Manicheans,[397] the Dayṣānites,[398] Marcionites,[399] and the Magi.[400] The dualism of the Manicheans, al-Māturīdī explains, rests on the notion that all things came into existence from the mixture of light and darkness. The light and the darkness originally were divergent; the former was on a high position having infinitely four directions, north, south, east and west, while the darkness was on a low position which had a finite direction toward the point of meeting (*iltiqā'*). Then the darkness lusted after the light and so they mingled with each other. Thus the world became as the result of their mixture and to the extent of that mixture. Each of them has five genera (*ajnās*): redness, whiteness, yellowness, blackness, and greenness.Therefore, whatever comes of these genera from the substance of light, is good, while whatever comes of these genera from the substance of the darkness, is evil. Also, each of them has five senses: hearing, seeing, taste, smell and touch. Therefore, whatever obtains the substance of light is good, while whatever obtains the substance of darkness is evil. Both the light and the darkness have spirit. The spirit of darkness is called *Hummāmah*; it is living. The world succeeded (*ghalaba*) in imprisoning the light; the light is not perceptible and whatever comes from it, comes naturally and is all good; the *Hummāmah* is perceptible. Each one of them (light and darkness) will return to its proper domain. Then it is found there the superior things are the purest and the inferior are the most turbid. The nature of both of them is lightness (*khiffah*) and heaviness (*thiql*) of weight. Therefore they are in the position of mutual repulsion because the light (of weight) tends toward the high and the heavy tends toward the low. Thus time flows until they will be freed from the aspect of finitude in the same manner as they mingled with each other in the beginning.[401]

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[397] The founder of Manicheanism was Mānī, the son of Futtaq. He was born 215/216, began preaching his new religious views in 242 A.D., and was executed by Bahrām I, King of Persia, 277. Cf. *Fihrist*, vol. ii, p. 1038. See Gustav Flügel, *Mani*, (Brochhaus, Leibzig, 1862); Henri-Charles Puech, *Le Manichéisme*, (Paris, 1949).

[398] The founder of Dayṣānism was Ibn Dayṣān, who, was also called Baredesanes. He was born near Urfa, was first Christian and then accepted the idea of dualism between light and darkness. He lived 175–222. Cf. *Fihrist*, vol. ii, p. 980.

[399] The founder of Marcionism was Marcion. Cf. *Fihrist*, vol. ii, p. 1039.

[400] Magi pl. of Magus are the members of a hereditary priestly class among the ancient Medes and Persians. Magus is called also Ostanes and al-Rūmī, as his books were known in Greek. Cf. *Fihrist*, vol. ii, p. 1074.

Al-Māturīdī responds to this dualism of the Manicheans by saying that in it there are contradictions. First, he argues, the meeting parts of the light and darkness are finite, and the finite is definite, and the definiteness is a sign of generation; it is not possible that the entirety of the finite parts be infinite.[402] Second, if the nature of the lower is to go downward and the higher to go upward, which is the mutual repulsion, how did it happen that the lower went upward which is the nature of the pure higher, i.e., the meaning of the good. In this manner the lower became both the light and the darkness, a fact which invalidates the doctrine of duality. Third, if the substance of darkness saw the substance of light, and if the former won over the latter, it would mean that the substance of darkness possesses knowledge, sight, power, self-suficiency and honor, while the substance of light is in ignorance, incapacity, and depravity. Fourth, they say that the action of the light is by its nature and the action of the *Hummāmah* is by its volition. This means that the *Hummāmah* originated the world, which invalidates the doctrine of two origins. Rather, the whole world is the act of One. Fifth, they affirmed the definiteness of the point of union, which means that the light and the darkness must have been eternally either in mutual contiguity or discrepancy. If they were in discrepancy, then the contiguity would be generated; and if a part is generated, so is the whole. Whereas if they were in contiguity, one of them would necessarily increase to the point that it gets mixed with the other. In either case, it is clear that there must be an increase, which is the proof for its finitude and that is the proof for the generation. Al-Māturīdī continues to argue against the dualism of the Manicheans, the essence of which is that there cannot be two origins of the world; but there is only One and Unique God.

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[401] *Tawḥīd*, p. 157.

[402] *Ibid.*; Cf. also al-Maghribī, p. 144.

As for the Dayṣānites, their doctrine, al-Māturīdī states, originally was identical with that of the Manicheans, but they added to it the statement that the light is entirely white, and that the darkness is entirely black; the light is living and it was that which mingled with the darkness which was dead as the light found the rough side of the darkness and wanted to mingle with it in order to soften it. Some of them, however, maintain that the light was annoyed by the darkness so that it drove away the latter from itself. But by doing so the light stuck to it and went on deeper in mingling with it in the same manner as the one who gets stuck in the mud tries to get out but instead he sinks more and more into it. They also say that motion comes from light, and rest from darkness as they are two contraries; the motion of light is its sense and the rest of darkness is its non-sense. Thus their whole doctrine is based on the notion of two contraries, i.e., light and darkness.[403]

Al-Māturīdī responds to this doctrine by saying that if there were two contraries as two prime origins, why could there not be four natural origins because they are also contraries; or six because all things have six directions as contraries; or seven because the bearer of these directions is not being described as having a direction preceding it; or five because the integration of these four natures is made by the fifth; or if it had been as the dualists maintain, there would have had to be the third origin because these two, light and darkness, existed and the world was not, and there was no good or evil and it is absurd that their discrepancy was by itself as well as integration. Therefore it stands established that they came into existence by a being other than themselves.

Furthermore, al-Māturīdī argues, the doctrine of One does not necessitate by any means the doctrine of two. But the reason why these people adopted the doctrine of dualism lies in the fact that they are incapable of grasping the divine wisdom of things to the extent that they thought of God in terms of the characteristics of their own needs and desires, and they judged God's actions according to the wisdom of their own actions.[404]

With regard to the Marcionites, al-Māturīdī says that they hold that, in between the light which is on high and the darkness which is below, there is a middle being which is the sensible and efficient man; and, according to them, the man is life in the body. They maintain that these three were disintegrated and then became mixed up; that each genus of them imitates that which follows it in the same manner as the sun imitates its shade in the upward direction. So does the middle imitate the light and the darkness, which drives it toward the downward direction; and so did two prime substances imitate each other.[405]

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[403] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 163–164.
[404] *Ibid.*

Al-Māturīdī contends that if man is life in the body, which is in a sense the sensor the body uses, then this middle must have brought about the mixture of the higher and lower by his management because without his mixing, they could not have come together. This middle is using them which means that there must be only One God. Therefore, the idea of mixture is invalid. Moreover, their indication that man is mixture — which they take to be his life — is wrong because man does not know the arrangement or management of his own beginning, nor is he capable of improving that which is corruptible in him, all of which is the plain proof that there must be an arranger who is One.[406]

Finally, the Magi maintain, he explains, that God was impressed by his creation and then became afraid of that which is opposite to him in it. Then he thought about it, a result of which was the generation of *Iblīs* (Satan). Some say, though, that God suffered from his own image (*sic. bi'aynah,* which is I think to be read as *bi'aynihi,* meaning *in propria substantia)*, then he turned around and saw *Iblīs* with whom he made peace on the condition that he (*Iblīs*) be left alone for a while, but after the said period God destroyed him, the result of which is that all evil comes from *Iblīs* and all good comes from God. If this really represents their doctrine, al-Māturīdī comments, they are then the worst of the dualists.[407]

Apparently, the essence of the dualism of the Magi is the idea of good, which comes from God, and of evil, which comes from *Iblīs.* In other words, the world is perpetually full of good and evil things; God is wise and good therefore it cannot be that evil comes from him, but there must be another source which causes that evil, i.e., *Iblīs* which also must be eternal because the evil things are coterminous with the good things. Al-Māturīdī's response to this assertion is based on his doctrine of divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*) which he frequently reiterates as he goes along explaining the problem of the evil in the world. This divine wisdom, according to him, means putting things in their proper place. So, if there is evil in the world, it is to be understood in the context of God's wisdom, and not in the sense of His having opposite to save Him from the evil deeds. For, God is the only Creator of every thing in the world and He knows best what is appropriate for the world in accord with His wisdom, including the things which seem to us to be evil.[408]

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[405] *Ibid.*, pp. 171–172.
[406] *Ibid.*, pp. 171–172.
[407] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

As regards Christians (*al-Naṣārā*), al-Māturīdī says that they disagree as to the nature of Jesus (*al-Masīḥ*). Some of them believe that Jesus has two spirits: one human (*rūḥ al-nāsūtiyyah*) which is originated, and the other divine (*rūḥ lāhūtī sic.*) which is eternal and is a part of God which entered the body. In fact, they say that there are only Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Others rendered the spirit which is in Jesus to be God, not a part of God. But a group of these maintains that the divine spirit is in the body on the assumption that a thing exists is another thing, while the other group entertains that the spirit is in the body for the sake of arrangement (*al-tadbīr*) and not for the sake of comprehension (*iḥāṭah*) of it. And still some others say that for a divine part to reach Jesus, the other part (Jesus' part) must also reach God.

Thereupon al-Māturīdī said:

> It is to be said to them if the Spirit which is in Jesus is eternal and only a part, then how did it happen to become the son without reaching other parts than him? If they say: "Because it is smaller," it would necessitate

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[408] *Ibid.*, pp. 184–185.

> that all the parts of the world are sons because there is something bigger than them, and so it must be with the rest of the parts as well. This would further entail that the world in its entirety is made up of sons. Thus it becomes clear that the son is younger than the father and so the question is: how did they (son and father) become eternal? If they gave the example of the seed, they should be asked then: which is the thing of that son? If they say: the whole, it means then that the whole is son and father, a statement which denotes the rendering the father to be a son for himself. And if they say: it is a part of it (seed) without there being short-comings in the original whole in the similar manner as it is the taken part of light, the answer to this is what if the taken part is originated as it is that taken from the light. Therefore the belief in the eternity of the Spirit which is supposed to be son is invalid. But if they claimed that the transmitted (*manqūl*) from God is the same as the taken (*ma'khūdh*)from the light, the answer would be the same as previously stated.[409]

Having stated the basic dualistic views of the dualists and those of the Christians regarding their doctrine of Trinity, and then having made his objection to both of these doctrines on the basis of pure Islamic monotheism which holds fast to the idea that there could be no two or three or more eternal beings but only One eternal and self-sufficient God, al-Māturīdī goes on to say that:

> Among the adherents of the doctrine of *tawḥīd* are the Mu'tazilites too who maintain the eternity of the things (*qidam al-ashyā'*); but the term *qidam* (eternity) corresponds to the term *azal* (sempiternity) which, in turn, abolishes the idea of monotheism as we have already explained it while dealing with the philosophic doctrine

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[409] *Ibid.*, pp. 210–211.

> of the eternity of the universe. Additionally, they entertain that in the beginning God was not Creator, nor was He Merciful, and then He became so by originating the things. This view is similar to that of the dualists who believe in the discrepancy of essence (*dhāt*) which then underwent the act of mixture, as well as to that of those who hold that in the beginning the matter was 'one' with respect to one aspect and then it changed into that state with the origination of the originated things. But the doctrine of these last ones is more applicable to Reason than that of the Mu'tazilites because they necessitate the change of the originated thing in its origin, while the Mu'tazilites necessitate that change not in the origin but in something other than itself. (Whereas we see that) in the present world no one changes from his present state by that which originally does not subsist in him (*bimā lā yaḥillu bihi*).[410]

According to al-Māturīdī, in other words, not only the Mu'tazilites abolished the orthodox doctrine of *tawḥīd* among the adherents of Islam, the Anthropomorphists violated it also by their literally and conceptually likening God to the creature in terms of Him being corporeal, having dimension and limits and being in the state of motion and rest. By doing so they rendered to God these characteristics which are known to be originated. Nothing of this can be attributed to God, exalted be He.

Now to establish the Islamic orthodox doctrine of monotheism, al-Māturīdī employs three kinds of arguments: (a) traditional, (b) rational and (c) the testimony of the world by creation.

(a) *Traditional*

Al-Māturīdī's first traditional argument is based on the general agreement among the people, despite their other disagreements, that the Creator of the universe is One. As for those who advocate the idea that there are more creators than One, they say so on the assumption that the number one is only the first term in the series of numbers by way of which counting starts and which indicates majesty, power, prestige and grace. So, according to this assumption, whatever goes beyond the mathematical starting point, power, prestige, and grace, cannot be but a number by virtue of its being a number. However, the numbers are infinite; and in reality the calculated things are beyond the limits of numbers. The world cannot be but finite in number because if there were many creators, each one of them would create something and consequently the whole would exceed the finitude by virtue of an infinite number of creators, and that is far from being so. Additionally, there is no given number to which an increase or decrease cannot be applied. Therefore, it is invalid to say there can be more than one single creator of the universe.[411]

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[410] *Ibid.*, pp. 120–121.

Furthermore, al-Māturīdī argues, there has been no mention at all that anyone except God, as He is known to the adherents of *tawḥīd*, had ever claimed the divinity or performed an act which would indicate his divine character. Nor had anyone, except God, ever sent the prophets by the signs that would subdue Reason; and the fact that the prophets were sent by clear signs which impressed Reason, proves that they could be sent only by One God because otherwise the given signs would be in contradiction as different gods would try to give different signs. Therefore, the belief that there is more than one God is a pure delusion.

(b) *Rational*

The core of al-Māturīdī's rational argument for the oneness of God is the *Mutakallims'* argument well known as the argument of mutual hinderance (*dalīl al-tamānu'*). In fact, this argument is based on Qur'ānic verses such as: (a) "*If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides God, there would have been confusion in both! But glory to God, the Lord of the Throne: (High is He) above what they attribute to Him.*"[412] (b) "*No son did God beget, nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others. Glory to God (He is free) from the (sort of) things they attribute to Him.*"[413]

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[411] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

It is in the spirit of these verses that al-Māturīdī states that if there were more gods than One, the existence of the world would be possible only in the technical sense (*bi al-iṣṭilāḥ*); and that would mean the abolition of the divinity. Moreover, if there were more gods than One, each one of them would want to do the opposite thing to the other, e.g., if one of them wanted to establish something, the other would want to annihilate it and the like. Therefore, there could be only One God.

(c) *The testimony of the world by creation*

In essence, al-Māturīdī's argument of this kind is his Cosmological Argument for the existence of God, i.e., the current laws of the phenomenal world indicate that there must be a necessary eternal being that first, brought the world into existence and second, preserves its continuous existence. As for the preservation of the world's constant existence, if there were more gods than One to perform that, the world's arrangement would be fluctuant in the sense that the seasonal changes would not follow their fixed times, the rotation of the sun, the moon and the stars would be in disorder, and the nourishment of the human and animal creature would be confused. But since everything in the world operates in a harmoniously arranged manner, this cannot be so by the arrangement of many creators but only by a single One. Therefore, there is no god but God.

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[412] *Ibid.*
[413] *Ibid.*

In this preceding discussion, as can be seen, we have tried to give a somewhat detailed exposition of al-Māturīdī's contention for the doctrine of monotheism in the light of both the non-Islamic monotheistic views and Islamic, Mu'tazilite and Anthropomorphic, approaches to this problem and, finally, we have made an attempt to bring in his Sunnite (orthodox) arguments for that matter. In fact, the essence of the essential attributes of God lies in a proper understanding of Islamic monotheism which is strongly grounded in the Islamic orthodox belief in God's eternity *a parte ante* and *a parte post,* His self-sufficiency, and His uniqueness. The following presentation of the existential attributes of God is meant to clarify further these preceding assertions about God and to bring closer to human understanding His existential characteristics which are inseparable from His essence yet superadded to it.

(2) *Existential attributes*

Unlike the *Kalām* discussion about the essential attributes of God which, as has been shown in our study so far, covers both Islamic and non-Islamic approaches to the essence of God, the discussion about His existential attributes is usually limited to Islamic circles alone; but as in the discussion of the essential attributes, we find in the discussion of the existential attributes of God three major patterns that have been advanced in Islamic theological literature. Namely, there are the ultra-positive pattern (*tashbīh)* of the Anthropomorphists, the ultra-negative pattern (*ta'ṭīl* or *nafy*) of, the Jahmites, the Mu'tazilites, and the philosophers and finally the moderate pattern (*ithbāt*) of the orthodox Sunnites.

As we have already seen, the Anthropomorphists, represented by the three major groups of the *Ḥashawiyyah* among the Traditionalists, the *Hishāmiyyah* among the Shi'ites, and the Karrāmites, conceived God both semantically and conceptually as a corporeal being. In this concept, "the Anthropomorphists (*al-Mujassimah*)," al-Ash'arī reports, "maintained that God has a hand, a face, legs, eyes, and a side, and they went so far as to say that He has limbs and bodily organs."[414] This view of the Anthropomorphists came as the result of their *verbatim* understanding of the Qur'ānic verses in which these notions of God having hand, face, eyes, etc., are expressed, such as: (a) "*... the hand of God is over their hand ...* " and " ... *Nay, both His hands are widely outstretched ...*"[415] (b) "*But the face of thy Lord will abide (for ever).*"[416] (c) "*So We inspired him (with this message) 'Construct the Ark in front of Our eyes ...*"[417] The solution of the orthodox to this problem is that these terms should be taken as they are without any further qualification (*bilā kayf*).[418] Although al-Māturīdī does not explicitly state this doctrine of *bilā kayf* of the early orthodox Muslims (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*),[419] he implicitly accepts it as the ultimate alternative[420] and as opposed to the allegorical interpretations of these terms by the Mu'tazilites who, for example, interpreted 'the hand of God' to mean *ni'mah* (grace) and 'the side (*janb*) of God' to mean *amr* (command).[421]

In addition, as al-Ash'arī reports: "Many Anthropomorphists held that God, before He created the creation, was not knowing, not powerful, not hearing, not seeing and not willing. Then it happened that God willed; and His will is His motion. So when He wills to create something, He moves and the willed thing comes into existence. For the verb *arāda* (to will) means to move; and His motion is not other than Him. They also say that God's power, His knowledge, His hearing, and His sight are *ma'ānin* (concepts) and are not other than Him, neither are they things because the thing is corporeal."

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[414] *Maqālāt*, vol. i, p. 290.
[415] Qur'ān: 55: 27.
[416] *Ibid.*, 30: 38–39; 76: 9; 92: 20.
[417] *Ibid.*
[418] *Ibid.*
[419] *Maqālāt*, vol. i, p. 290.
[420] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 44–49.
[421] *Ibid.*

It is clear, then, that the Anthropomorphists, on the one hand, believed in the corporeality of God, and, on the other, they maintained that God's attributes are created. Of course, neither of these views are acceptable to al-Māturīdī as we shall see in more detail below.

As for the ultra-negative attitude toward the attributes of God which was first held by Jahm, then taken over and further developed by the Mu'tazilites, it has its roots in the idea of saving the purity of Islamic monotheism from being ruined by the brutal *tashbīh* of the Anthropomorphists. Thus, in order to preclude the absolute unity of God from any sort of likening, the Mu'tazilites came with the idea of a complete denial of the attributes of God, stating, in the words of the Mu'tazilite Abū Hudhail al-'Allāf, that:

"The knowledge of God is He himself and so is His power, His hearing, His sight, and His wisdom. And Abū al-Hudhail held the same view regarding the rest of God's essential attributes, as he used to claim that if it is said that God is to be knowing, that means that He is knowledge by virtue of himself and it indicates the denial of Him being ignorant, as well as signifying the known as it is or as it will be; and also, if God is said to be powerful, that means that He is power by virtue of himself and it indicates the denial of Him being powerless, as well as signifying the created object (*maqdūr*) as it is or as it will be; and in the same order he arranged the rest of the essential attributes."[422]

Hence, according to Abū al-Hudhail, whom we take here to speak on behalf of Mu'tazilism, the attributes of God, which al-Māturīdī considers to be necessarily given by men as they try to express the essentialities of God's existence, are needed just to indicate that which God is not, but they have no real superadded meaning to the pure and absolute unity of God. For, if they had superadded meaning of His eternal qualities, then the supposed absolute unity of God would be severely violated. Thus the sight of God, as well as the rest of the existential qualities, is not something outside of the essence of God, but it subsists in Him as the reality of His whole divine being.

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[422] For more on the Mu'tazilism of Abū al-Hudhail see, Richard M. Frank, *The Metaphysics of Created Being in accordance to Abū al-Hudhail al-'Allāf*, (Istanbul, 1966).

Somewhat different from and more complicated than the view of Abū al-Hudhail concerning the predication, was the theory of *ma'ānī* (modes) of Mu'ammar and the theory of *aḥwāl* (states) of Abū Hishām. As for the doctrine of the former, al-Ash'arī gives this account of it:

> Some say that a body, when it is moved, is moved only on account of a *ma'nā*, which is the [cause of its] motion. Were it not for this, there would be no reason for this body, rather than for another body, to be moved, nor would there be any reason for this body to be moved at the time at which it is moved rather than to have been moved at some prior time. Since this is so, it may similarly be reasoned with regard to the motion that, if there was no *ma'nā* on account of which it was the motion of the body moved, there would be no reason for it to be the motion of that body rather than the motion of some other body. And so this *ma'nā* is a *ma'nā* of the motion, but there is no totality and sum to the *ma'ānī*; and they take place at a single time. The same holds true of black and white, that is, of the fact that it is the black of one body rather than that of another and that it is the white of one body rather than of another. The same holds true of the difference (*mukhālafah*) between blackness and whiteness and

> similarly, according to them, it holds true of other genera and accidents, that is to say, when two accidents are different (*ikhtalafā*) or are the same (*ittafaqā*), inevitably one must assume the existence of *ma'ānī* to which there is no totality. It is also their claim that the *ma'ānī* to which there is no totality are predicated by an act of the place in which they abide. The same similarly holds true of the predicates 'living' and 'dead,' for when we predicate of a person that he is living or dead, we must inevitably assume an infinite number of *ma'ānī* which abide in him, for life cannot be life to him rather than to another except on account of a *ma'nā*, and that *ma'nā* [cannot be *ma'nā* of that life rather than of another life except] on account of a *ma'nā*, and so on infinitely. This is the view of Mu'ammar.[423]

Not being satisfied with this theory of *ma'ānī* of his Mu'tazilite colleague Mu'ammar, especially with respect to his view of the infinite *ma'ānī* (modes), Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī, a century later, advanced his own theory of the predication, i.e., the theory of *aḥwāl* (states) which is based, according to al-Baghdādī, on three different situations:

> The first situation is that in which the described object is described by a predicate in virtue of the described itself because it deserves that predicate in virtue of a state (*ḥāl*) in which it finds itself. The second situation is that in which the described object is described by a predicate in virtue of a mode (*ma'nā*) which

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[423] See, *Maqālāt*, vol. ii, p. 41; The above translation is taken from Wolfson; *Kalām*, pp. 151–152; For more on the theory of *ma'ānī* of Mu'ammar see, Khayyāṭ, *K. Intiṣār*, ed. and trans. into French by N. Nader (French title: *Le Livre du triomphe et de la réfutation d'Ibn al-Rawandī l'hérétique*), (Beirut, 1953), pp. 9, 22; Richard M. Frank "Al-Ma'nā: Some Reflections on the Technical Meanings of the Term in the *Kalām* and its Use in the Physics of Mu'ammar", *JAOS*, vol. 87, 1967, pp. 248–259.

> is specific to it because of a state (*ḥāl*) in which it finds itself. And the third situation is that in which the described object deserves a predicate neither in virtue of itself nor in virtue of a mode (*ma'nā*) which is specific to it, but it has that predicate rather than some other.[424]

From the presentation above, one can without a great difficulty discern that both Jahm and Abū al-Hudhail acquired some philosophical influence as they sought to establish the absolute unity of God by denying even the slightest hint of Him having additional qualities which, in effect, would diminish the pure meaning of that unity.[425] On the other hand, both Mu'ammar's theory of modes and Abū Hāshim's theory of states are an attempt on their part to somewhat improve the Mu'tazilite concept of the total denial (*ta'ṭīl*) of God's attributes, a concept which was severely criticized by the orthodox and which could hardly stand the trial of the Qur'ānic testimony. While Mu'ammar's theory was still far from obtaining recognition by the orthodox circles because of its containing the idea of the absurdity of regress *ad infinitum* of modes, Abū Hāshim's theory of states could get some recognition by the orthodox theologians, and it was accepted even, at least in principle, by al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwainī as a possible explanation of the qualities of God.[426]

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[424] *Farq*, p. 181; For more on Abū Hāshim's theory of *aḥwāl* see, Wolfson, *Kalām*, pp. 167–182; Max Horten, "Die Modus — Theorie des Abu Haschim" ZDMG 63 (1909), 303ff; Daniel Gimaret, "La Théorie des *Aḥwāl* d'Abū Hāshim al-Gubbā'ī d'Aprè 'a des sources Aš'arites" *Journal Asiatique*, 1970, pp. 47–86; Richard Frank, "Abū Hāshim's Theory of 'States': Its Structure and Function" *ACTAS IV CONGRESSO DEESTUDIO ARABES E ISLĀMICOS*, COIMBRA — LISBOA 1 A 8 DE SETEMBRO DE 1968, Leiden, 1971, pp. 85–100.

[425] For more on the possible connection of Jahm with philosophy see, Richard Frank, "The Neoplatonism of Ǧahm ibn Ṣafwān" *Le Muséon*, LXXVII, 1–2, 1965, pp. 395–424; As for Abū al-Hudhail's connection see, *Maqālāt*, vol. ii, p. 178, where al-Ash'arī says: "Abū al-Hudhail took this idea (i.e., that the attributes of God are He himself and not other than Him) from Aristotle as this claimed in some of his books that the Creator (*al-Bārī'*) is whole knowledge, whole power, whole life, whole hearing, whole sight. Then Abū al-Hudhail improved the wording for himself by stating that the knowledge is God Himself, and so is His power." Cf. also Tritton, p. 88; M. Fakhry, p. 13.

It is interesting to note that al-Māturīdī, except for Jahm, did not mention in his *K. Tawhīd* most Mu'tazilites, either Abū al-Hudhail, or Mu'ammar, or Abū Hāshim, nor did he allude to their respective theories of the predication, even though I am certain that he was aware of them and their views. Instead, al-Māturīdī chose to deal with Mu'tazilism through the person of al-Ka'bī whose views, he comments, "are sufficient to grasp the *madhhab al-i'tizāl* since he is, according to the Mu'tazilites, their best *Imām* of the people of the whole world."[427] This is not surprising, as al-Ka'bī was al-Māturīdī's contemporary in terms of both time and place. This, however, does not mean that al-Māturīdī has entirely neglected other Mu'tazilite personalities. Thus, besides al-Ka'bī as his special case of treatment, al-Māturīdī also frequently quotes the views of two other prominent Mu'tazilites, namely, al-Naẓẓam[428] and Muḥammad ibn Shabīb,[429] sometimes to combat non-Islamic doctrines with them and sometimes to criticize them.

Among the differences between al-Māturīdī and al-Ka'bī, two are the most typical. The first difference came from the question as to whether God's essence and action are the same or not. Al-Ka'bī's view was that they are not. He explained it in this way:

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[426] Cf. Al-Āmidī, *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 27, no. 3–4; *Tamhīd*, pp. 200–203; *Irshād*, pp. 80–84; In his *K. al-Shāmil*, however, al-Juwainī rejected the idea of Abū Hāshim's theory of states, see vol. i, pp. 71, 196–205.

[427] *Tawḥīd*, p. 49.

[428] Cf. *Tawḥīd*, pp. 150, 152, 155.

[429] Cf. Ibid., pp. 123, 126, 137, 141, 150, 153 – 154, 169;

"Whatever can be different in the sense of state and personality is to be regarded as the attribute of action as, for example, saying: 'one is providing someone (*yarzuqu fulānan*)' or 'he is merciful in one state and is not in another one (*wa yarḥamu fi ḥālin wa lā yarḥamu fi ḥālin)*'. The same is applied for speech, as this same goes also for the personalities. This, however, cannot be said to be the same regarding the quality of power, knowledge, and life. Therefore these are the qualities of the essence (*dhāt*)".[430]

Al-Māturīdī's view was, however, that God's attributes of action are both the same as and coeternal with His attributes of essence. This whole question is connected with al-Māturīdī's concept of *takwīn* (God's quality of creation) which will be discussed more later. Therefore, it suffices here only to mention his response to al-Ka'bī that "God's quality which is His action (*fi'l*, i.e., *khalq*, creation), is His quality of essence (*dhātuhu*)."[431] As we can see, God's active or creative qualities, according to al-Ka'bī, are created and so is His speech, which is the central point of dispute between the Mu'tazilites and the orthodox Sunnites.

Consequently, the second difference between them is that regarding the employment of the terms for the qualities of God. In other words, if one says that God is merciful, does this mean in the sense of our understanding of that which the term *raḥīm* conveys or is it just a description of the described object without a real meaning which is implied in the respective term? Being a Mu'tazilite, al-Ka'bī rejects any supperadded descriptive qualities of God because of the possibility of equivalence (*wifāq*) in conception between God as a perfectly monotheistic being and man as an imperfect creature of God. Therefore, it cannot be said that God possesses knowledge as something added to His essence, but it could be said that God is knowing only for the sake to disassociate Him from ignorance (*jahl*).

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[430] *Tawḥīd*, p. 50.
[431] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Al-Māturīdī contends that the employment of the human terms does not necessitate the equivalence, but rather in some instances, they indicate the difference (*khilāf*). Therefore, we must use certain terms in order to express both the essential and existential aspects of God, not in the sense that those terms indicate the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of that which we understand by them, but in the sense that they convey the reality (*ḥaqīqah*)of God which can be known only in this way. For, if we were to refrain from using these terms, we would not be able to know the true essence of God, nor His existential characteristics which are so essential for our establishment of a proper relation with Him.[432]

At this point in our discussion it may be well recognized that al-Māturīdī both affirms the superadded qualities of God and believes that these qualities are coeternal with His essence and not accidental. Thus, God is eternally (*fī al-azal*) (1) powerful (*qādir*), (2) knowing, (*'ālim*), (3) living (*ḥayy*), (4) speaking (*mutakallim*) (5) willing (*murīd*) (6) hearing (*samī'*) (7) seeing (*baṣīr*), and (8) creator (*mukawwin*). Of course, there are other qualities which may be added to this list, such as, glorious (*karīm*), good (*jawād*) and the like, but these seven above mentioned are the main qualities of God according to the Ash'arites, and the eighth, as one can see, is an additional quality of creation which the Māturīdites explain to be the eternal quality of God of creation. We shall talk more later about the difference between the Ash'arite and the Maturidite approach to this issue.

Now, to justify the terminological validity of the superadded qualities of God, al-Māturīdī has developed the following catechismical scheme. Sometimes, al-Māturīdī explains, God's name may be expressed metonymically as it was when Pharaoh asked: "What is the Lord of the worlds (*mā rabb al-'ālamīn*)? He (Moses) answered: "He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth."[433] But sometimes the question "What is He (*mā huwa*)?" may imply "What is His characteristic?", the answer to which would be: "He is hearing (*samī'*) and seeing (*baṣīr*)"; but sometimes "What is He" may imply "Which is the thing of the creation by which God's essence could be known?," but God is far from being likened to anything; while sometimes "What is He" may imply: "What is His action?", the answer to which is: "the creating of the creation, and the putting everything in its proper place, which is, in fact, His wisdom"; and sometimes "What is He?" may imply: "Where did He come from?", but God, exalted be He, is far from coming into existence from anything, nay, He is the Creator of all things (*mukawwin al-ashyā'*).[434]

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[432] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

> (These questions) about the qualification (*kayfiyyah*) of God, al-Māturīdī continues, may have two aspects: first, it may be sought by them God's similitude to a thing among the things, but God is unique and so there are no likes to Him, and second, it may be implying the inquiry as to His quality. The answer to this would be the same as to the previous question, i.e., there is no qualification (*kayf*) of God because in it there is an inquiry about something which is like Him, but God, exalted be He, is far from being like anything in terms both of His essence and attributes. But if the question were as to whether He is described or not, the answer would be 'Yes' but in such a way as He himself described Himself by possessing mercy, knowledge, and power.[435]

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[433] Qur'ān: 19:65.
[434] *Tawḥīd*, p. 107.
[435] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

From this last passage we may easily sense al-Māturīdī's ultimate orthodox alternative to the doctrine of *bilā kayf* with our additional note, however, that it is only an ultimate alternative and not necessarily the obscurantist approach of some of the traditionalists who, in the doctrine of *bilā kayf*, see no way to any additional explanation of the attributes of God.

Additionally, al-Māturīdī supports his contention for the affirmation of the attributes of God by both Tradition and Reason:

> As for Tradition, God is named in the Qur'ān as well as the other revealed books in a way in which that names have been reported by the Prophets and the rest of the people. But some people converted these names to mean something other than Him, lest in the affirmation of God's names there should be likening of every name to that which is named by it. If that were the case, that would be also with regard to the concept of *ta'ṭīl*, because in the denial of God's attributes there is a sort of likening Him to the things that have no names. In any case, we have already explained the impossibility of the likening by the equivalence of the names. Therefore, God is to be named in the way He has named Himself, and He is to be described in the way He has described Himself.[436]

With respect to Reason, al-Māturīdī's central point of departure toward the establishment of the existential features of God is God's quality of absolute volition (*ikhtiyār*); al-Ash'arī, it is interesting to note here, asserted God's absolute life (*ḥayāt*) to be the starting point for the justification of the rest of His qualities. Thus, al-Māturīdī explains:

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[436] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

> Reason necessitates (that God possesses certain qualities) because, if the diversity of the creature, in terms of its substances and accidents, has been established, it has been proven, then, that His action is not the action (of His innate necessary) nature, but it is the action of His own choice [will] (*ikhtiyār*). Also, the harmony of the sequence of action, in which there is no appearance of any corruption, nor void of wisdom, proves that the acted upon (*al-maf'ūl*) comes as the result of the volition of the actor, and that is the proof that the creation was His real action …
>
> So, if the volition (of God) has been established, then His ability to create as well as His will that that Creation be in the way it is, have been also established. For, the things which are coming into existence through the one who has no power, are coming in the way of compulsion and corruptibility; and the contraries cannot be together. Therefore, it stands established that whatever comes into existence which is assumed to have come through the power, comes by way of volition. These are also the tokens of the reality of action in the present world, a fact which leads us to the knowledge of that which is absent …
>
> Similarly, we do not in the present world find that one who is able and not prevented from action, has no action, nor do we find one who is able to speak not speaking; and the present is the proof for the absent. So (these qualities) are bound to God too.[437]

Now, compare these specimens from al-Māturīdī's *K. Tawḥīd* to the following passage from al-Ash'arī's *K. al-*

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[437] *Ibid.*, pp. 44–46.

Luma':

> Q. Do you maintain that God has always been knowing, powerful, hearing and seeing?
>
> A. So we maintain.
>
> Q. What is your proof of that?
>
> A. The proof of that is that one who is living, if he be not knowing, is qualified by some contrary of knowledge such as ignorance, doubt or other defects. So if the Creator had been ever living, but knowing, He would have been qualified by some contrary of knowledge such as ignorance, doubt or other defects," and so on al-Ash'arī explains the rest of God's attributes which are based on His being living.[438]

In this, as in many other instances, we can see the verbal side of disagreements between al-Māturīdī and al-Ash'arī which, together with a few substantial ones, led to the formal establishment of two main orthodox (Sunnite) theological schools, i.e., Māturīdism and Ash'arism. It is from the phenomenon of the perfection of the current laws of the universe, al-Māturīdī argues, that we deduce the Creator's volition and from that His other positive characteristics, such as life, power, hearing, seeing etc.; and it is from the phenomenon of life, al-Ash'arī argues, that we conclude that the Creator must have knowledge, power, hearing, seeing and so on. So whether one takes volition or life as the vital premise of the phenomenon of God's existence, the conclusion is the same.

Among the existential attributes of God, the attribute of God's speech (*kalām*) has been the most controversial one. In fact, the issue of the nature of *Kalām Allāh* was most likely the starting point for the whole Islamic theology as it emerged in the beginning of the second century of Islam. The core of the problem of *Kalām Allāh* is not whether God really spoke to the prophets or not, for all the *Mutakallims* agreed that He did, but rather whether the speech of God as we have it now in the form of the Qur'ān is eternal and uncreated, or accidental and created. Basing their doctrine of monotheism on the absolute unity of God, according to which any notion of God's having eternal attributes in addition to His pure essence is rejected, all the Mu'tazilites believed that the Qur'ān is God's created word in time and space. Having taken al-Ka'bī as the representative of Mu'tazilism, al-Māturīdī takes up this issue with him by stating that al-Ka'bī:

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[438] See, Richard J. McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ash'arī*, Arabic, p. 11ff, English, 14ff.

> Has argued for the creation of the speech (of God) on the basis of the notion of the coming [of speech] (*al-ityān wa al-majī'*), a notion which entails an aspect of creatureliness.[439]

Al-Māturīdī's response to this was:

> God has also related the notion of the coming (*al-majī'*) to Himself, but that does not mean that He is created. He put that though in such a way as to fit His divine nature. So this same is to be applied to the previous (notion of *kalām*). (That is to say) the notion of the coming (*al-ityān*) should also be applied to the aspect of His divine nature, and not to the aspect which is commonly known among the creature as changing and vanishing. Similar to this is the reality of action and *kalām*, an example of which is the saying of Ibrāhīm :"*I do not like those that are disappearing*".[440] And those who are once in a state and then in another state are among those that are disappearing.[441]

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[439] *Tawḥīd*, p. 53.
[440] Qur'ān: 6:76.
[441] *Tawḥīd*, p. 53.

Furthermore, al-Māturīdī argues for the eternity of the speech of God, as usual, on the basis of both Tradition and Reason:

> That God has the quality of speech can be established on the basis of both Tradition and Reason. As for the Tradition we find (this statement of the Qur'ān): "... And to Moses God spoke directly."[442] Since this is mentioned in the source (i.e., the Qur'ān), there should not be dispute among the people about the speech of God. Moreover, there is a general agreement that God is speaking (*mutakallim*) and that He possesses *kalām* in reality despite the fact of some disagreements as to the nature of it.
>
> Concerning Reason, if anyone who is able and knowing does not speak, he does so because of some defect such as disability or hindrance. But God is far from having (these defects). Therefore, it stands established that He is speaking. Additionally, the one who does not speak in the present world, does not speak by virtue of his not hearing and seeing (*lā yabṣiru*) because of a certain defect. But God is *munazzah* (free from) any modes (*ma'nā*) which entail deafness and blindness as well as dumbness. In fact, that God possesses speech is known *a fortiori* because through it He is being praised in the present world, apart from the fact that through the ability of speech men are regarded as superior to the animals and that anyone who can speak, if he does not do so, does not do so because of disability or silence.[443]
>
> And then if someone said: "Did God really make Moses hear His *kalām* as He said:"... And to Moses God spoke directly." It is to be said to him: "God made Moses

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[442] Qur'ān: 4:164.

[443] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 87–88.

> hear through Moses tongue and through the letters He created and the sound He originated. Therefore, God made him hear that which was not created.[444]

From this last point which al-Māturīdī made regarding the nature of God's speech it is clear that he believed in the eternity of the Qur'ān and also that he distinguished between the divine uncreated speech, which later became known among both the Māturīdites and the Ash'arites as *al-kalām al-nafsī* (the absolute speech of God), and the human created speech, later known as *al-kalām al-ḥissī* (the relative speech of men), by way of which the absolute speech of God, which is presently in the form of the Qur'ān, is being pronounced.[445]

In concluding this present discussion, we would like to say, that al-Māturīdī's Islamic orthodoxy, as opposed to both the brutal Anthropomorphism of the *Mushabbihah* and the ultra-rationalism of the *Mu'tazilah*, is recognizable in his finding the middle way between these two diametrically opposed approaches. That is to say, al-Māturīdī's solution of the problem of the attributes of God is rational inasmuch as human reason is able to follow the given guidance of the divine instructions, and it is dogmatic inasmuch as human reason is at the point of crossing the limited line of that guidance. In other words, man should employ his reason in seeking for a deeper knowledge about the essence and existence of God, but he must also always remember that the best way to that knowledge is that given by God Himself in the Qur'ān.

(3) *The active or creative attributes*

In the course of our preceding discussion about the essential and existential attributes of God we have had occasion to indicate indirectly the active or creative attributes of God as well. Nevertheless, the justification for the special treatment of the active attributes of God is not only technical, but also substantial in the sense that the actions of God (*af'āl Allāh*) are relative to both His essence and to His relation to men and vice versa, while His essential and existential qualities have no relation to men inasmuch as God is conceived as the absolute Creator and man as His particular creature. Thus, based on this distinction between the absolute actions of God and His actions relative to men and vice versa, a subject matter bearing on man's Free Will and Predestination which will be dealt with in the next section, we shall concentrate here only on the former issue of God's absolute actions.

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[444] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[445] For more on the question of *kalām* as a quality of God and *khalq al-Qur'ān* as a controversial issue among the *Mutakallims* as well as al-Māturīdī's handling of them see, al-Maghribī, pp. 193–204.

In essence, the problem of the absolute action of God may be seen, as far as al-Māturīdī is concerned, in the view of the whole concept of *takwīn* (God's attribute of the absolute creativity). The basic questions concerning this issue are: Was God the Creator from eternity? If He was, then, in accord with the necessary relation of cause-effect, the world was coeternal with Him; and if He was not, then, how did it happen that He created the world at a certain point in time and not before or after? Was He able to create the world before it was actually created, but chose not to, or was He unable to create it, and then somehow became able? As can be seen, the whole question revolves around the problem of eternity, creation, and creation *ex nihilo* of the world.

To the above mentioned questions al-Māturīdī gives the following answers:

> If someone said: 'If God is described by *takwīn* (creation) from eternity (*fī al-azal*), why is the created thing (*mukawwan*) not also so described'?
>
> He is to be told that this is because God brings things into existence to be as they are supposed to be. Similar

to this is His power over things and His will for them as well as His knowledge about them in such a way that everything be in its proper time. For the origination is viewed in the sense of what it will be and not of the knowledge about it, despite the fact that neither the knowledge of the definition of the existing (*al-kā'in*) nor the power over it are changed.

This is the principle on the basis of which this issue should be conceived. For, if God is described by a quality such as His power and knowledge, it necessitates that these qualities be regarded as eternal. But when a thing is mentioned together with Him by a description similar to His, such as, the thing known (*al-ma'lūm*) [by His knowledge], the thing decreed (*al-maqdūr*) [by His power], the thing willed (*al-murād*) [by His will], or the thing originated (*al-mukawwan*) [by His origination], the times of (the creation of) these things should also be mentioned lest the eternity of these things be imagined.

The proof of the first is the previous description, while the proof of the second is that, if the time (of the creation) of the thing acted upon (*al-maf'ūl*) is not mentioned, this thing acted upon might indicate its eternity, or ignorance about its timing as well as to the inability of its originator. For, if it is said that the object was originated at a certain hour, it indicates that it was originated at that particular hour; and this same is applied with respect to knowledge, power and will.

And if it is said that the creation without a created object is the affirmation of disability (*'ajz*), the answer would be that this would be only if the creation were to occur at a certain time but it did not occur at that time. This same would go for the will and for knowledge if it were not for ignorance and compulsion. But if the coming of the object into existence is at the determined point in time, (the above mentioned hypothesis), then, it is not true as we have already explained with regard to knowledge. And the same is applied to hearing, seeing, magnanimity (*al-karam*) and goodness (*al- jawād*); all these qualities of God's are eternal, even though the thing which is being heard and that which is being seen as well as the rest of the similar things are originated. This is the way generation operates. Therefore, the time of the thing heard must be mentioned while mentioning these two things, and so goes with the former (i.e. God and the object of His creation).[446]

Being fully aware of the difficulty of the concept of *takwīn* (the divine act of creation), al-Māturīdī states that:

> If men were not short of reaching the comprehension of the meaning of the concept of *takwīn* (the divine act of creation), the easiest way to that comprehension would be implied in the simple statement "*kun* " (Be) and so everything is according to (God's) knowledge of that which is going to be. Thereby everything is being created as it is created at a certain time without repetition. This category also involves the question of command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahy*), promise (*wa'd*), and warning (*wa'īd*). This (the divine act of 'Be') would mean, then, information about an existent and about what that existent is going to be, in addition to the perpetually different states of the existents, their times and places. But men cannot comprehend creation (*al-takwīn*) without associating with it effort and hardship.[447]

As we can see, al-Māturīdī's attempt to clarify the concept of *takwīn* has two goals: first, to affirm the eternity of God's quality of creation (*khalq* or *takwīn*), and, second, to explain away the cause-effect relation which entails the necessity of the eternity of both God as the Creator and the world as His creation. To achieve the first goal, he brought the idea that the eternal quality of creation is not the very act of the creation but the knowledge about and the power over the would-be created object; that is, the very fact that God knows that a certain thing is going to be created in such and such a way and his ability to carry out that predetermined creation is, in effect, His eternal quality of creation. Consequently, by this explanation al-Māturīdī has achieved his second goal, i.e., he has explained away the philosophic notion of the necessity of the timely relation between the cause and the effect by asserting the absolute volition, knowledge, and power of God, all of which assume the determination of the coming of an object into existence in a specific time, space, and shape, without following the law of causality.

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[446] *Tawḥīd*, p. 47.

[447] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

It is interesting to quote here al-Humām's assessment of this problem. He says:

> We would like to mention an issue on which the Ash'arite and Ḥanafite masters had disagreed. It concerns the question of the attributes of actions (*ṣifāt al-af'āl*), namely, the attributes which signify the cause-effect process (*ta'thīr*), a notion that involves terms different from the term power (*qudrah*) in terms of the attributes of the effects (*āthār*) of that *qudrah*. The totality of this notion of *ta'thīr* is expressed in the term *takwīn* (making to be). Thus if the effect (*athar*) is created, (two terms are involved): the creator (*al-khāliq*) as a name (*ism*) and the creation (*al-khalq*) as an attribute (*ṣifah*); and if it concerns provision (*rizq*) the name is the provider (*al-rāziq*) and the attribute is the act of provision (*al-tarzīq*); and if it means life the name is the giver of life (*al-muḥyī*); and if death the name is the giver

> of death (*al-mumīt*). (This is the explanation of al-Māturīdī which) later Ḥanafites adopted after him on the assumption that these are eternal attributes super-added to the prime attributes. But there is no such expression either in the statement of Abū Ḥanīfah or in those of the early Ḥanafites, except that they (the later Ḥanafites) took that idea from Abū Ḥanīfah's statement that: 'God had been Creator before He created, and He had been Provider before He provided,' a statement upon which they developed several aspects of it by reasoning. The Ash'arites, on the other hand, maintain that the attribute of *takwīn* in its details is nothing more than the attribute of *qudrah* in the sense of its connection with a specific connected object. Thus, creation is *qudrah* in the sense of its connection with the created object, and also provision in the sense of its connection with the supplying of that provision. Therefore, what they (the later Ḥanafites) mentioned regarding this meaning does not contradict this assertion nor does it require an additional attribute which cannot be referred to the connected *qudrah* (power) and the connected *irādah* (will) as well. So their (Ḥanafites) assertion is not warranted. As for their referring to the early Ḥanafites, there should be another look at it. Nay, the very statement of Abū Ḥanīfah implies that which the Ash'arites had asserted.[448]

From this passage of al-Humām, we may discern three things: first, that al-Māturīdī was the first one who initiated the concept of *takwīn* ; second, that this issue of the concept of *takwīn* and that of *qudrah* of Ash'arī is one of the basic substantive differences between Māturīdism and Ash'arism;[449]

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[448] Al-Kamāl b. al-Humām, *al-Musāyarah*, pp. 37–39.

[449] For more on the difference between al-Māturīdī's concept of *takwīn* and Ash'arī's *qudrah* see, *al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah*, pp. 39–43; and between the later Māturīdites and Ash'arites see, F. Kholeif, *A Study*

and, third, that al-Humām, though being a Māturīdite in other issues, preferred the Ash'arite view in this regard, a fact which indicates the flexibility of some Sunnites.

So much for God's attribute concerning His absolute action. Let us now turn to the question of His actions related to man and vice versa. Relative, but not essential, to the problem of God's attributes are two theological issues with which Muslim *Mutakallims* dealt a great deal and which are especially controversial between the Mu'tazilites and the Sunnites, namely, the issue of God's throne (*'arsh*) or place, and that of the beatific vision of God (*ru'yat Allāh*). In fact, the whole question, regarding the first issue, goes around the Qur'ānic verse: الرحمن على العرش استوى ([*God*] *Most Gracious is firmly established on the throne*),[450] and similar verses;[451] and, as regards the second one, two verses particularly come to mind:(a) “لا تدركه الابصار وهو يدرك الابصار” (*No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision* ...)[452] and (b) وجوه يومئذ ناضرة الى ربها ناظرة (*Some faces, that Day, will beam (in brightness and beauty); looking towards their Lord.*)[453]

Both of these two ideas, i.e., that God may be described in terms of having a throne or place, and that He may be seen by human eyes, were rejected by all the Mu'tazilites, literally accepted by the Anthropomorphists, and interpreted and on the basis of the Scripture ultimately adopted by the Sunnites.

(a) *God's throne*

The rejection of the Mu'tazilites rests on their concept of pure monotheism which assumes God's absolute unity without any additional literal or doctrinal description. Thus,

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on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and his Controversies in Transoxiana, pp. 17–29, trans. 39–43.

[450] Qur'ān: 20: 5.

[451] Cf. *Ibid.*, 39: 75; 40: 7; 69: 17.

[452] *Ibid.*, 6: 103.

[453] *Ibid.*, 75: 22–23; cf. also, 7:143; 6:76.

with respect to God's place implied in the notion of Him having established Himself on the throne, they entertained that:

> God is everywhere in the sense that He is arranger of every place, while others said in the sense that He is the guardian (*al-Ḥāfiẓ*) of places and, therefore, His essence is existent everywhere.[454]

As regards the very verse *al-istawā 'alā al-'arsh* they interpreted it in the allegorical way as in the meaning of *al-istīlā'* (seizure, taking possession).[455]

Having adopted the view that God is a corporeal being, the Anthropomorphists accepted the literal meaning of the above verse, namely, they maintained that God is seated on a throne exactly as the verse indicates.[456]

As usual, caught between these two diametrically opposing views — the pure rationalism of the Mu'tazilites and the crude literalism of the Anthropomorphists — al-Māturīdī, on the one hand, had to persuade reason to admit the positive meaning of God's throne and ultimately to yield to the Scripture, and, on the other, to soften the crudity of the corporealists. The first of these two tasks al-Māturīdī achieved by explaining that:

> The idea of the relation of the universal things to God and vice versa is the description of Him in terms of His sublimity, elevation, majesty, and His glory, in the same way as (it is said in the Qur'an): "*To Him belongs the possession of the heavens and the earth,*" (25: 2); "*(He) is the Lord of the heavens and the earth,*" (37: 5); "*(He) is God of the creation,*" (6: 102); "*(He) is the Lord of the worlds,*" (1: 2); "*(He) is above everything,*" (6: 18), and the like. As for the relation of particular things to Him, it comes from the

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[454] See, *Maqālāt*, vol. i, 286.
[455] Cf. al-Maghribī, p. 227.
[456] See *supra*.

> idea of the specification of (these things) in terms of their nobility, dignity, and superiority as the substances of them (deserve such a relation), as we find, for example, in (these Qur'ānic expressions): "*God is with those who are conscious of Him,*" (16: 128); "*The mosques belong to Him,*" (72: 18); "*the camel of God,*" (91: 13); "*The house of God,*" (106: 3), and the like. Similarly, men's relation among each other is also conceived in this way; there is nothing there which would prevent men from conceiving their relations as that which implies specific superiority in particular, and as the benefit of possessing power and domination in general.[457]

This *ta'wīl* (interpretation) of al-Māturīdī regarding the meaning of the throne of God is not much different from that of the Mu'tazilites. It is, as it can be seen, both allegorical and rational; it had to be so because that is the only language the Mu'tazilites would understand. However, the difference between al-Māturīdī and the Mu'tazilites as well as the former's loyalty to Sunnism are recognizable in his dogmatic (*bilā kayf*) approach to this problem, an approach which is common to all the Sunnites when they see that reason is exhausted and is no longer able to be persuasive.[458]

Al-Māturīdī's second task, i.e., the rejection of the idea of God's having limited place as maintained by the *Mushabbihah*, is accomplished by his simple statement that it:

> Contains the idea of partition in the sense that a certain part is in that which has parts and that some (parts) are superior to others. All this pertains to the description of the creation (and not to God).[459]

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[457] *Tawḥīd*, pp. 68–69.
[458] *Ibid.*, pp. 71–72.
[459] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Although al-Māturīdī discusses this problem at length, especially in response to the Mu'tazilite al-Ka'bī, and gives rational justification for God's attribute of the throne,[460] the bottom line of his conception of this problem is dogmatic; that is, this and similar questions, as we shall also see with respect to the problem of the beatific vision of God, are to be accepted as the Scripture presents them because reason is incapable of grasping every detail of them, and because the sacredness of the Scripture must be maintained.

(b) *Beatific vision*

The Mu'tazilites found support for their rejection of the possibility of the vision of God in both this world and in the hereafter in the Qur'anic verse: "*No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision* ... ;"[461] while the verse: "*Ilā rabbiha nāẓirah*,"[462] in which there is an explicit indication that some people (believers) will be looking towards their Lord, they interpreted as the connotation of *intiẓār* (awaiting), and not that of seeing God with human eyes. In addition, the Mu'tazilites had their rational argument that vision presupposes the limited relation between that which is seen and its seer; but God is unlimited in all aspects, and therefore He cannot be seen by creatures.

Al-Māturīdī's first assertion with regard to this issue is that:

> The vision of God, exalted be He, in our opinion is necessary and true without *idrāk* (comprehension) nor *tafsīr* (interpretation).[463]

But feeling, perhaps, that this dogmatic approach needs additional support, al-Māturīdī goes on to give some of his rational thoughts on this matter. Thus, he argues:

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[460] *Ibid.*, pp. 67–77; Cf. also al-Maghribī, pp. 225–235.

[461] Qur'ān: 6: 103.

[462] *Ibid.*, 75: 23.

[463] *Tawḥīd*, p. 77.

> *Idrāk* means the comprehension of the definite; God is far from being described by any definiteness because that would entail limitation and confinement; He is free from all of that and is One in His essence, whereas definiteness is a description of the object of contiguous parts until its termination. Moreover, it is impossible to apply any definition to God; and even if there were a definition in the sense of no definition or a definition of some sort, nothing would change in this respect. On the other hand, everything has its definition by way of which that thing is known, such as flavor, color, taste, smell, and other aspects of the definite specifics of things, as God rendered each thing to be known and comprehended through that specific aspect, even the faculties of reason and the accidents. Therefore, God informed us that He is not of any kind of these definite aspects of things through which we may know Him, which is to be applied with regard to vision and knowledge of Him as well.[464]

As we can see, al-Māturīdī wants to explain that the word *idrāk* is not to be understood as vision (*ru'yah*), but rather as comprehension (*iḥāṭah*) which presupposes something definite and knowable in the object we want to know. But since God cannot be conceived through any definite aspect by means of which we can comprehend His essence, the above verse is appropriate and warranted. On the other hand, the word *nāẓirah* (looking or seeing) is to be literally accepted as such without any further interpretation because:

> Vision has several aspects, the reality of all of which

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[464] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

> cannot be known except through the knowledge of a particular aspect of it. Therefore, if vision is expressed in terms of sight, it is to be accepted as such, and if there is something whose aspect cannot be known except through the mentioning of sight, the further investigation into its essence and reality should be avoided.[465]

It is interesting to note that al-Māturīdī rarely quotes *Ḥadīths* in support of his theological opinions, but in this instance he does cite this famous one concerning the beatific vision:

> It has been reported from the Prophet, peace be upon him, that he said: 'You will see God on the Day of Judgement as you see the moon; you will not miss that.[466]

While, as can be seen, al-Māturīdī maintains that the beatific vision of God on the Day of Judgement is certain, the vision of Him in this world is possible, but unlikely to happen.[467]

As we have already indicated on several occasions in the course of this study and as these two last considerations of God's throne and the beatific vision have shown, al-Māturīdī employs Reason as far as it can go, and when he sees that it has reached its limit, he calls for the help of Revelation. This feature of al-Māturīdī is especially recognizable, as we have seen, concerning God's attributes and other issues related to it. In fact, this characteristic is the watch-word of his orthodoxy and the license for the foundation and construction of his special Sunnite school. It is, therefore, in al-Māturīdī's ability to allow Reason to perform its assigned task to its limit, that we recognize his Sunnism, but at the same time, it is in his being aware of Reason's limitation that we realize his Islamic orthodoxy. This recognition of the necessity of applying Reason in combination with the due respect for Revelation will be especially noticeable in our following discussion about man, particularly that aspect of it which deals with man's Free Will and Predestination and his moral-ethical relationship with God and the world.

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[465] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[466] *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80. Cf., Imām al-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, p. 327.

[467] *Ibid.*, pp. 82; For more on al-Māturīdi's arguments for the beatific vision and his responses to al-Ka'bī, see *Ibid.*, pp. 77–85; al-Maghribī, pp. 207–216.

Theme three—*Man*

It has become clear from our study so far that al-Māturīdī views the relationship between God and the world as the one between the Creator and the created, or the Originator and the originated. In other words, the existence and the continuation of the latter is dependent on the former and not vice versa. Man is a part of the world, and so his relationship with God is the same as that of the world. But being only a part of the existence of the world as a whole, both man's individual and his collective existence is dependent on that whole existence of the world; and being, as far as we know, the only intelligent being among the animate beings in the world, man possesses the ability to reflect on both God and the world and thus to form his attitudes towards both of them. As for his relationship with the world, since he himself is a substance of it, it is direct; but his relationship with God, whether positive in the sense of theism or negative in the sense of atheism, is indirect and thus obtained either through belief in the idea of the prophethood by means of which God reveals Himself or through his own speculative endeavor. It follows, then, that man's relationship with the world is necessary and existential, while his relationship with God is ideological, moral and dogmatic.

The particular aspects of the necessary and existential relationship of man with the world is a subject of different sciences which are beyond the scope of our present study; it is, then, the aspects of the ideological, moral and dogmatic relationship of man with God that we will be occupied with here. It goes without saying that this area of the study of the relationship between God and man is vast and inexhaustible. Therefore, it is necessary that we define our present objective in regard to this subject; and as far as Islamic theology, and its Sunnite branch in particular, are concerned, this definition of the goal is especially required.

Thus, in the context of this requirement, we would like to confine our presentation here to al-Māturīdī's concept of Free Will and Predestination together with a subordinate issue of it, namely, the issue of ethics. That is to say, our focus will be primarily on al-Māturīdī's consideration of the problem of Free Will and Predestination coupled with his ethical attitudes as these two are inseparably related. Furthermore, we will try to concentrate on the substance of al-Māturīdī's thought concerning these two issues rather than on its historical position, although some comments on its relationship to earlier concepts will be provided when necessary.[468] Hence, the objective of the discussion in this section (as for this work as a whole) is not comparative but rather descriptive and analytical. As far as al-Māturīdī is concerned, it should be viewed as a basis on which further studies may be developed. We feel that, because of the vast theological material which always surrounds al-Māturīdī's theological thought, many could not duly appreciate his own genuine contribution unless the material was presented in its own terms in this way.

Before coming to the main views of al-Māturīdī on Free Will and Predestination, however, we must say a few words about the general concepts of faith (*īmān*) and prophethood (*nubuwwah*). Although, as is well known from Muslim theological works, these two issues are almost always dealt with by the *Mutakallims* as a separate matter and at the end of their theological discussion, we think that without first acquiring an insight into one's understanding of faith, as the positive and invisible relationship between God and man, and without an adequate approach to the meaning and the function of prophethood, as the basic channel of that faith, at least as far as the revealed religions are concerned, one's concept of the relationship between God and man as a whole cannot be properly grasped. On the other hand, with a proper understanding of one's concept of faith and prophethood, we may more comprehensively grasp one's attitudes towards the issues of Free Will and Predestination, his ethics, and the like. What we want to say here is that in order to be able to grasp al-Māturīdī's concept of indetermination and determination of the actions of man and his moral responsibility for these actions, we have to know first how al-Māturīdī conceives man within the frame of his faith in God and his acceptance of that which was given to him in the name of God.

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[468] For a good presentation on the historic development of Free Will and Predestination in the early Islamic theological thought see, M. Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam*, (London, 1948).

(a) *Faith*

Historically, the problem of faith (*īmān*) was one of the first and most controversial issues the nascent Muslim community was faced with after the conflict between 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and Mu'āwiyah. And as in the case of God's attributes, the approach to this issue of faith became polarized by two diametrically opposing groups: the Khārijites, who could not see the validity of faith in the heart without being followed by good deeds, and the Murji'ites, who regarded the validity of faith in the heart without necessarily being followed by good deeds. In other words, the puritanism of the Khārijites was so unrealistic, almost Utopian, that it threatened the very existence of the Muslim community, and the conformism of the Murji'ites was so permissive, almost promiscuous, that it menaced the very foundation of

Islamic morality. The question was, "could a Muslim, who committed a mortal sin be a legitimate member of the Muslim community or not?" The answer of the Khārijites to this question was unconditionally negative, and that of the Murji'ites was indifferently positive (the kind of Murji'ism which we have in mind here is that of the extreme right, and is not compatible with the moderate Murji'ism of Abū Ḥanīfah and al-Māturīdī as we shall see). Therefore, the need was felt for a third solution that would, on the one hand, narrow the gap between these two distant poles, and, on the other, provide a reasonable guideline for spanning the gap between Islamic theory and practice. That is to say, the groundwork for the emergence of Sunnism in this regard had been laid down as it had been gradually appearing for other issues in Islamic theology as well.

The pioneering effort towards this goal was made by Abū Ḥanīfah. By his statement: "We do not consider anyone to be an infidel on account of sin; nor do we deny his faith,"[469] saved the Muslim community from the puritanism of Khārijism, and by his proclamation: "We enjoin what is just and prohibit what is evil,"[470] he gave the community the necessary incentive to strive for an Islamic morality. This *bayān* (elucidation) solution of Abū Ḥanīfah was taken over by al-Māturīdī, who further elaborated it by his traditional and rational arguments.

Al-Māturīdī's traditional argument for the idea of Ḥanafite (orthodox) Murji'ism (the idea of postponement of the judgement of one's sincerity of faith) goes as follows:

> 1. Abū Ḥanīfah, may God have mercy on him, was once asked: 'From where was the idea *al-irjā'* derived'? Upon which he said: ' (It was derived) from the action of the angels as it was said to them: "*Tell Me the names of*

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[469] See, *Rasā'il*, p. 2; *Muslim Creed*, pp. 103–106.

[470] *Rasā'il*, p. 3; *Muslim Creed*, pp. 103, 106–107.

these things if you are truthful".[471] Thus when they were asked about a thing which they did not know, they delegated it to God. This is also true of those who commit grave sins, because if there had been one good deed accepted by (God), all other bad deeds, except polytheism (*shirk*) might be forgiven. Therefore, the committer of grave sin is not to abide perpetually in hell, but his affair is postponed until the judgement of God who, if He wishes, may forgive him ...[472]

2. "If it is said that God is Forgiving, Merciful, and Friendly (*Wadūd*), then He, if He wishes, may encounter man's bad deeds with his good deeds and make his good deeds atonements for his bad deeds, as God did say: "*Indeed, those things that are good remove those that are evil* ";[473] and on another occasion He said: "*We shall expel out of you all the evil in you* ".[474] So God mentioned different kinds of atonements by way of which one may be excused.[475]

3. If God wishes, He will punish man in accordance with his deed, or He will reward him in accordance with his good deeds, as He said: "*Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it* ", [476] and other similar verses in which the mention of the punishment for evil and the reward for good is made. This is the characteristic of justice in punishment, while if the award were granted, that would be God's grace. This kind of *irjā'* is binding.[477]

In response to the charge of the *Ḥashawiyyah* that: "The

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[471] Qur'ān: 1: 31.
[472] *Tawḥīd*, p. 383.
[473] Qur'ān: 11: 114.
[474] *Ibid.*, 4:31.
[475] *Tawḥīd*, p. 383.
[476] Qur'ān: 99: 7.
[477] *Tawḥīd*, p. 383.

Murji'ites were called by such a name because they did not consider all good deeds to be a part of faith,"[478] al-Māturīdī said:

> This (charge) cannot be supported neither etymologically nor rationally. As regards etymology, (it is known) that the word *irjā'* means *ta'khīr* (postponement) ..., and as for Reason, (it is known) that the reality of things are grasped in two ways: either (a) through the senses which lead to rendered insights, or (b) through reasoning of sensory knowledge and apparent proof. There is nothing in the sensual knowledge nor in the derivation of reasoning that would indicate that the idea of *al-irjā'* denotes the exclusion of faith from good deeds.[479]

As we can see, al-Māturīdī's thought is aimed at both puritan Khārijism and permissive Murji'ism, as well as the *Hashawiyyah*'s misunderstanding of Ḥanafite (orthodox) moderation which has its origin in the idea of Murji'ism. Consequently, al-Māturīdī rejected the view of the Khārijites that good deeds are a condition for true faith; and he objected to the conformistic attitude of the Murji'ites that faith is merely a matter of cognition (*ma'rifah*) without necessarily involving good deeds. Instead, al-Māturīdī defined faith as assent (*taṣdīq*) which may or may not be preceded by cognition (*ma'rifah*), and which is not conditioned by good deeds but may, as a result, produce good ones.

Al-Māturīdī's first contention, i.e., that faith is not a matter of cognition but rather of assent, is based on his understanding that belief does not presuppose the knowledge about the object we believe in, e.g., we do not know the past prophets but we believe in them, and, on the other hand, we know that there is Satan but we do not believe in it. Therefore, faith is not based on the notion of our knowledge of something from which our belief comes, but rather it is grounded in our trust in God, His Angels, His Prophets, and so forth, which, though it may come as the result of our knowledge, is still a matter of the assent of our heart, and so is only known to us and accordingly judged by God. As for the second point, i.e., that faith is not necessarily conditioned by good deeds, al-Māturīdī argued that since faith is a matter of the heart and actions are a matter of the body, it does not mean, if the body sometimes fails to follow the heart, that faith ceases to exist. It is, however, more likely than not that this faith in the heart will produce good deeds.

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[478] *Tawḥīd,* p. 381.
[479] *Ibid.*, pp. 381–382.

Furthermore, al-Māturīdī explains, being thus located in our heart, faith is created; and having been fully asserted by our own will, it should not be proclaimed with the notion of *istithnā'* (exception). This first assertion of al-Māturīdī, i.e., that faith is created, is directed against the view of the Jabrites (determinists) that fidelity (*īmān*) and infidelity (*Kufr*) are eternally determined by God, and his second one, i.e., that affirmed proclamation of faith need not be followed with the phrase of exception *in shā' Allāh* (if God wishes), is directed against those who maintained that man cannot be sure about his faith and therefore must always say the above phrase as he proclaims his *shahādah* (formula of Islamic faith), "*There is no god but Allāh, and Muḥammad is His messenger.*"[480] This point is one of the literal differences between the Māturīdites and the Ash'arites.[481] Finally, al-Māturīdī remained faithful to his master Abū Ḥanīfah by his adoption of the latter's view that faith does not increase nor decrease and is equal in substance, if not in degree, with that of the angels and the prophets.[482]

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[480] For more on this see, *Muslim Creed*, Chapter II.

[481] For more on this see, *al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah*, pp. 6–8; Cf. also other comparative works between al-Māturīdī and al-Ash'arī which are given in the Bibliography.

[482] For more on all of these points of al-Māturīdī concerning his views on faith see, *Tawḥīd*, pp. 373–401; Cf. also al-Maghribī, pp. 372–419.

(b) *Prophethood*

Al-Māturīdī's main contention for prophethood is based on the ethical and socio-ethical argument.

> It is in the nature of divine wisdom that there be command (*'amr*) and prohibition (*nahy*). In fact, God created man in the best fashion and He subjugated everything that is on the earth of its blessings and the blessings of the heaven to them without their previously offering what may be regarded as gratification or decision. Therefore, Reason does not allow that such a benefaction be suggested to one who does not know how to appreciate it, because that would be a loss and injustice to the benefaction. Therefore, (God) made an obligation upon men to know the benefactor in order that they may know who deserves love and who is fond of gratitude. In this is the necessity for temptation which is connected with promise (*wa'd*) and threat (*wa'īd*) for the purpose of fulfilment of desire (*raghbah*) and fear (*rahbah*)[483]
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> ... In addition to what I have mentioned it is sufficient to those who have sound mind that the proofs for the command and prohibition are connected with the need for Revelation (*risālah*) [or prophethood]. Then, we say that the necessity for Revelation is warranted by Reason on the ground that Revelation is needed for both (the worldly and religious affairs ...[484]
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> Then, there are several reasons on the basis of which Reason calls for the necessity of the prophets. One of them is the existence of apparent mutual dispute among people as each one of them claims to be right and to be more correct (than others). Whereas it is generally

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483 *Tawḥīd*, p. 178.
484 *Ibid.*, p. 179.

> agreed that there is no one to arbitrate among them and to show them how to be united in their hearts and to integrate their words. It is known that mutual dispute is a cause for corruption and an introduction to annihilation. All this is bad in accordance with Reason. Therefore, Reason has concluded that there must be someone who will assist it (Reason) and to whom it may refer (this dispute) as he (that someone) possesses an adequate solution and knowledge. And it is known that there is no one more knowledgeable about this than the one who originated all of this in the first place. From this comes the belief in Prophets whom we know to have come from Him (God).[485]

In addition, being a Muslim, al-Māturīdī argues at length for the validity of the prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad,[486] especially against al-Riwandī, basing it on the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, Muḥammad's infallible morality, and his having been truthful in predicting some future events which happened after his death.[487]

Now, as we can see, al-Māturīdī views the relationship between God and man through the latter's inner capability of faith in the existence of the former, and through the extra intervention of God in the manner of His revealed words in order to prove that faith in man which would hopefully lead him to establish his individual moral as well as collective ethical life. As far as man's individual morality is concerned, which depends on the degree of his awareness of the existence and presence of God, it is a matter of his personal relationship with God, the validity of which only God is entitled to judge (the idea of *irjā'* [postponement of judgement of man's faith]); and as regards his morality in the context of his being a member of the Muslim ethical society, man must follow certain rules of behavior that are prescribed by the law of God, i.e, the Qur'ān. That is to say, individually man is free to form this or that attitude toward God, but collectively, as far as his Islamic faith is concerned, he is bound to certain traditional beliefs which guarantee his continuous existence and prevent him from destructive disputes. In this context of man's individual free will to act, which is assumed in his ability to think and in the view of his relative capability to always determine what is good and what is evil for his life here and in the hereafter, the conflict between his freedom of action and responsibility for his actions and God's absolute free will arises. We assume that in a non-religious context, the problem of man's Free Will and Predestination would not be as important as it is in the religious one. For, if all actions of man are predetermined by God, there is no sense in his reward or punishment in the hereafter; and, on the other hand, if man possesses total freedom of his action, what will be of the absolute will and action of God? It is, then, in the very quality of man's ability to think, in his faith in God, and in God's additional intervention to aid man in his struggle for a good moral-ethical life here and his happiness in the life to come, that the problem of man's relative will and power and God's absolute Will and Power came into question in the very early age of Islam.

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[485] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[486] For more on the concept of the prophethood of the Muslim philosophers and the orthodox Sunnites see, F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy*, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Midway reprint, 1979)).

[487] On al-Māturīdī's arguments for the prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad see, *Tawḥīd*, pp. 202–212; and on his response to al-Riwandī see, *Ibid.*, pp. 193–202. For more on different aspects of prophethood, such as *Nabī* (Prophet), *Rasūl* (Messenger), *Mu'jizah* (Miracle), *'Iṣmah* (Infallibility), and the like see, al-Maghribī, pp. 345–371.

(c) *Free Will and Predestination*

As in the case of other important theological problems in Islam, al-Māturīdī's treatment of the problem of Free Will and Predestination did not arise in a vacuum. Already by his time there had developed different approaches to the treatment of this problem which, as in the previous instance of God's attributes, had been polarized by two main opposing views, namely, the view of the absolute Predestination by God of the determinists, the Jabrites, and that of the total Free Will of man of the indeterminists, the Qadarites or the Mu'tazilites; and, as in the case of the problem of God's attributes, i.e., the problem of the *tashbīh* of the Anthropomorphists and the *ta'ṭīl* of the Jahmites and Mu'tazilites, al-Māturīdī took upon himself the responsibility for finding the middle-road solution regarding the problem of Free Will and Predestination. This conflict between pure determinism and total indeterminism and his middle-road solution al-Māturīdī has explained in this way:

> It has been reported that the Messenger, peace be upon him, said: Two kinds of people will not receive my intercession (*shafā'atī*) [On the Day of Judgement]: the *Qadariyyah* and the *Murji'ah*. The meaning of the *Qadariyyah* is that they denied the decree (*qadar*) to God. And the reason why (these two groups were denied the *shafā'ah*) is that the *Murji'ah* referred (*arjat*) the reality of human actions to God,[488] while the *Qadariyyah* denied the arrangement of these actions to God. The latter rendered the whole arrangement (of things) to belong to the creatures, even the world itself, whereby they come and go on the basis of their own arrangement; and according to them God arranged the resurrection (on the Day of Judgement), the people of Paradise and Hell. Regarding all of this, God possesses nothing but volition (*al-ikhtiyār*). Thus, in the reality of

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[488] Notice the difference of al-Māturīdī's interpretation of the idea of *irjā'* with regard to the problem of mortal sins and that here with regard to Free Will and Predestination. In the former instance the notion of delegation of human actions to God is justified and in the latter it is not.

> this world there is no realization of God's actions except that He brought things into existence after they were non-existent. However, the correct approach to this problem is that of the middle way (*al-madhhab al-mutawassiṭ*) between these two views. In support of that we have the statement of God, exalted be He: "*Thus We have made you to be a community of the middle (road),*"[489] as well as by the saying of the Prophet, peace be upon him: "The best things are those of middle road."[490]

To my knowledge, this is the first instance where al-Māturīdī explicitly states his middle-road theological stance. In other instances, where he tries to bridge the gap between two poles in Islamic theology and to establish his synthetic view, as we saw in the foregoing discussion, this middle-road approach of his is quite discernible but not explicitly stated. In this fact we may see the seriousness and complexity of the problem of Free Will and Predestination with which al-Māturīdī was faced and his clear position with respect to it.

It is interesting to note the clarification of al-Māturīdī concerning the Ḥashawites who were allegedly called *Qadariyyah*. This allegation is incorrect, he explains, because the Ḥashawites were the ones who:

> … inclined to the Marwānids whom they supported with their *madhhab* as they (the Ḥashawites) celebrated the connection of the bad deeds of theirs (the Marwānids), to God's *qaḍā'* and *qadar* (decree). (The Ḥashawites) thus helped (the Marwānids) as they exculpated them from their wrong doings by unduly referring their actions to God. This view of the Ḥashawites is also widespread with regard to the deeds of Mu'āwiyah …[491]

Concerning the pure determinism of the Jabrites, namely, the view that all human actions are in reality the actions of God which are only allegorically associated with man, al-Māturīdī dismissed it on the basis of (1) Tradition, (2) Reason, and (3) necessary knowledge.

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[489] Qur'ān: 2:143.
[490] *Tawḥīd*, p. 318.
[491] *Ibid.*, p. 318.

(1) The basis of Tradition has two aspects: (a) the aspect of command (*amr*) and prohibition (*nahy*) and (b) the aspect of promise (*wa'd*) and threat (*wa'īd*). For aspect (a) he quotes these two Qur'ānic partial verses “ ما شئتم اعملوا ” (… do what you will … [41:40]); “افعلوا الخير ”(… and do good … [22:77]), and for aspect (b) he quotes these three : “ يريهم الله اعمالهم حسرات ” (… thus will God show them (the fruits) of their deeds [2:167]); “ يعملون جزاء بما كانوا ” (A reward for what they have been doing [56:24]) “ فمن يعمل مثقال ذرة ” (… then shall anyone who has done an atom … [99:7]).[492]

(2) Reason tells us, al-Māturīdī explains, that it is impossible for one to command himself, or to obey himself, or to disobey himself. Therefore, it is impossible for God to be called a submissive, obedient, disobedient, silly, and unjust servant. Whereas, God has called all of those to whom He has issued commands and prohibitions by these names. Hence, if these names were to be applied in reality to Him, it would mean that He is both the Lord and the servant, the Creator and the created. This is rejected by both Tradition and Reason.[493]

Finally, (3) by necessary knowledge everyone knows that he is the one who chooses to do what he is doing, and that he is actor (*fā'il*) and acquiring (*kāsib*). But, al-Māturīdī observes, the Jabrites do not recognize sensory, necessary knowledge and, therefore, it is useless to dispute with them.[494]

As we can see, the whole point of al-Māturīdī against the pure determinism of the Jabrites is grounded in his contention for rational Islamic ethics which, on the one hand, assumes the essential role of God as the giver of a general ethical code for an Islamic behavior, and, on the other, stresses the ultimate responsibility of man for his actions. God only gives commands and prohibitions as well as provides ideas about good and evil actions, but man is the one who actually executes those deeds in accordance with his power and choice and thus is solely responsible for his own deeds. If man were not accountable for his own deeds, the whole idea of reward and punishment on the Day of Judgement would be nonsense.

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[492] *Ibid.*, pp. 225–226.

[493] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

[494] *Ibid.*, pp. 226–227.

It seems that al-Māturīdī's dismissal of determinism was easy and reasonable because, as he notices, the statements of the Jabrites are meaningless, and, therefore, have no great number of supporters. On the contrary, al-Māturīdī's dismissal of the total indeterminism of the Qadarites, especially the version of it that is associated with the Mu'tazilites, was troublesome and long. As usual, al-Māturīdī's main target among the Mu'tazilites is al-Ka'bī whom he considers to be the master of Mu'tazilism.

There are many issues that are connected directly or indirectly with the problem of Free Will and Predestination which al-Māturīdī discusses with the indeterminists in general and with the Mu'tazilites in particular. We think, however, that the heart of this whole problem revolves mainly around the question of God's absolute Will and Power versus man's relative will and power. In other words, how is it possible in the religious context to maintain the absolute Will and Power of God intact, and at the same time hold man, not God, morally responsible for his own actions?

We have already talked about God's absolute act of creation on which, it seems, all the Muslim theologians had unanimously agreed. Now, the question is, what is the role of God after that absolute creative action had occured? Does God still have an active role in determining man's actual deeds, or is man left free to do whatever he wills? It is well known that the Mu'tazilites maintained, as al-Māturīdī frequently points out, that God's actual action was only that of the first creation of the world and whatever is in it, and that this natural world and man as a part of it are afterwards governed by their own free will without God's actual interference, a contention which is supposed to explain the eschatological question of reward and punishment.

As could be expected, al-Māturīdī is not satisfied with this view. For one it disregards God's absolute volition (*irādah*) which has to do with the whole question of the creation of actions and which, if once admitted, entails the admission of the creation of all actions by God. For, the creation of actions affirms the divine absolute decree (*qaḍā'*) for the coming of things into existence as well as His detailed decree (*qadar*) as to their being good or evil. In fact, al-Māturīdī explains, the divine decree (*qaḍā'*) is the valuation (*ḥukm*) of a thing and the definition (*qaṭ'*) of its respective properties. This definition of the proper properties of an object is good for that object because it comes from the one who is wise and knowing.

As regards God's decree (*qadar*), al-Māturīdī continues, it has two aspects: first, it gives the definition of the coming to be in terms of its goodness and evilness, its beauty and ugliness, and its wisdom and foolishness. This is, in fact, the interpretation of wisdom which means the putting everything in its proper place; and secondly, it explains the fact about everything in terms of its time and space, its truth and falsehood, and its reward and punishment.[495]

We have already stated that the point of departure of al-Māturīdī's affirmation of the positive and active attributes of God rests on the affirmation of God's absolute volition (*ikhtiyār* or *irādah*). Here, concerning God's actual creation of actions, al-Māturīdī again emphasizes this point by saying:

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[495] *Ibid.*, pp. 35–37.

> The question of volition (*irādah*) may be attached to the question of the creation of actions on the basis of which, if once that creation is affirmed — and God is the one who chooses and wills that which is going to be — the volition is also affirmed on the ground of the quality of creation. But if this volition is not affirmed, the denial of it is refuted by the fact that there must be volition for actions in order to repel the constraint and inadvertence. This is also the real meaning of volition in the present world. But if by volition is meant wish, or command, or supplication, or satisfaction and similar notions by some of which it is not permitted that God be described, (then it is not permissible) while (if He were described by some other), it would be altogether inadequate.
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> It is possible that (volition) be singled out from (creation), as some people of *Kalām* have done, although the above contention is true as well. For, the opinion of the necessity of volition for everything, necessitates the opinion of the creation of actions, adding, though, that this may be reasoned by things which are not included in the first. But, in the final analysis, the first (contention) is also found in these things. [496]

It is interesting to note that when al-Māturīdī talks about God's absolute creation (*takwīn*), he usually uses the term *ikhtiyār* to denote God's absolute choice or volition for that creation, but when he speaks about the creation of actions (*khalq al-af'āl*), he regularly uses the term *irādah* to express that volition. Semantically, these two terms mean the same, i.e., choice, will, or volition, but technically perhaps they correspond to al-Māturīdī's above mentioned notion of God's initial absolute decree (*qaḍā'*) and His continued eternal creation of properties of things (*qadar*).

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[496] *Ibid.*, pp. 276–278.

Thus by his connection of God's absolute volition (*ikhtiyār*) with God's bringing nonexistent things into existence, al-Māturīdī, by his idea of *qaḍā'*, proved God's determination of existence as a whole, and by his connection of that volition (*irādah*) of God with the creation of existing properties of things, he, by his idea of *qadar,* saved God's eternal will from the Mu'tazilite notion of God's present inactivity, nay, impotence.

The following is a typical example of the dispute between the Mu'tazilites, who perceive God's act as a one-shot action, and al-Māturīdī, who tries to maintain God's eternal involvement in determining the destiny of the world and man. This example concerns the question as to the role of God or of man in man's guidance or misguidance expressed in the following Qur'anic verse: " *Those whom God wills to guide, He opens their breast to Islam; those whom He wills to leave straying, He makes their breast close and constricted …*" (6:125). The Mu'tazilites interpreted this verse, al-Māturīdī explains, by saying:

> (God) affirmed Islam to man by opening his breast, but not after this Islam once was found in him …[497]
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> It is to be asked, al-Māturīdī continues, was the heart of one who accepted Islam open at the time of his conversion and, was his heart closed at the time of his infidelity, or was his heart both open and closed at the same time? If he replies that it was open and closed at the same time, his lie is apparent to everyone who preserves his initial faith either in terms of Islam or *kufr* (infidelity).[498]
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> Furthermore, al-Māturīdī elaborates, he is to be asked: have you seen a disbeliever after he was a believer or perhaps have you heard about it? Or have you seen

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[497] *Ibid.*, p. 301.

[498] *Ibid.*

> a believer after infidelity ? There must be a positive answer to this. It is to be said, then, was the granting or withdrawal of reward based on the opening of the heart (*sharḥ*)or not ? If he says "No", he necessarily implies the breaking of the promise (*wa'd*) and the lie of the report (*khabar*); but, if he says, "Yes", it is to be said to him, what is the avail of his from these benefits, or what is the harm to him from this restriction (*taḍyīq*)? This is because he renders that to be reward or punishment, while in the beginning he detains that possibility by calling it once guidance or affection and once averting or hindrance.[499]

Al-Māturīdī's main purpose of this discussion is to prove both God's initial absolute volition and creation of actions and His continued role in determining the course of those actions, and not as the determinists believe that both the world and man were left independent from God in their performing their own actions. To further substantiate this point, al-Māturīdī this time found it useful to call his master Abū Ḥanīfah for help by reporting this narration from him: "Abū Ḥanīfah, may God have mercy on him, said: 'There is *kalām* between us and the Qadarites regarding two points we would like to ask them about: "has God known for ever that which is going to be and how it is going to be"? If their reply is negative, they become infidels because they made their God ignorant. But, if their reply is positive, they are to be asked: "did He want to execute His knowledge as He knew, or not". If they say "No," they, in fact, say that God wanted to be ignorant, but the one who wants that is not wise. But, if they say "Yes," they affirm that He wanted everything to be as He knew that it is going to be.' This is what I remember from the narration of Abū Ḥanīfah but which I did not mention verbatim.[500]

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[499] *Ibid.*
[500] *Ibid.*, 303–304.

There is one especially difficult aspect of the problem of Free Will and Predestination with which the Muslim *Mutakallims* were faced as they tried to keep intact the absolute Will of God and, at the same time, to positively explain the will of man which sometimes, it seems, manages to escape the control of God. That is to say, God wants good and does not want evil things to happen, and, especially, He wants man always to do good deeds and not evil ones, for the purpose of which He, in fact, sent His messengers. But, as we observe, the evil things often happen and man frequently disobeys the commands of God. Do these things happen by God's Will or not? If they do, is God, then, unjust, and, if they don't, is God's Will, then, limited?

In order to preserve the absolute justice of God, the Mu'tazilites came up with their famous concept of the most salutary action of God (*al-aṣlaḥ*). The core of their contention for this concept is that since God is just, there cannot be injustice or evil things coming from Him, but from someone other than Him. We have already touched on this question while we were dealing with al-Māturīdī's treatment of the reason for the creation.[501] And as we have seen there, al-Māturīdī objects to this idea and substitutes for it his concept of divine absolute wisdom. It is interesting to note that al-Māturīdī relates this concept of *al-aṣlaḥ* of the Mu'tazilites to Iranian dualism.[502] For, the Mu'tazilites viewed God to be only the author of good and not of evil things in the same manner as the dualists maintained that the coming of good things is from the eternal origin of good and that of evil things from the origin of evil. The reason for this lies in their incapability of seeing God's actions except in terms of human understanding and measurement, al-Māturīdī observes. In order both to refute this concept of *al-aṣlaḥ*, or different authors of good and evil and to further establish his own view of divine wisdom, al-

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[501] *Supra*, pp. 126–127.
[502] Cf. *Tawḥīd*, 247.

Māturīdī offered this reasoning:

> On the whole, it is true that both injustice and foolishness are ugly and that both justice and wisdom are beautiful. However, a certain thing is wisdom in one situation, while it is foolishness in another one; it is injustice in one situation, while in another it is justice, as I have mentioned previously regarding the taking of medicine, eating things and drinking them, destroying them and preserving them, as some kinds of them are the substances for certain needs whether they are allegorical or real and the like. If, then, the beauty of wisdom and justice is established as a general principle as well as the ugliness of foolishness and injustice, God must be described with every and each action He creates by wisdom and justice or grace and righteousness because it has been established that He is good, generous, self-sufficient and knowing …
>
> If this is established, then the statement of the dualists of two principles is invalid. This is because of their ignorance about the wisdom of that which is harmful and that which is beneficent. For, it is possible that each action which is harmful in one instance becomes beneficent in another. Also, what the Mu'tazilites say that whichever action is not meant for the benefit of other (than its actor), is not wisdom, is invalid. Because there is no harmful action at all from which one cannot receive benefit either through the way of guidance (*dalālah*) or admonition (*maw'iẓah*), or that there cannot be in it the reminder of benefaction or the warning for retribution, and that it might not lead to the knowledge of that to whom the creation and the command belong, and many other things which would take us long to mention.[503]

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[503] *Ibid.*, pp. 217–218.

It is, then, apparent from the above specimens of *K. Tawḥīd* that God cannot be called by any name that would indicate injustice or foolishness. But, at the same time, there cannot be anyone other than Him who is the author of the things that seem to us to denote injustice and foolishness. Instead, everything comes from God. It is the deficiency of man's reason that he cannot always see the divine wisdom in those things which now may seem to be unjust and foolish, but then they may become just and wise. Therefore, man must be patient to see the eventual wisdom of the things which he cannot comprehensively grasp.

As for the problem of the disobedience of man and the Will of God, we would like to present two typical examples of al-Māturīdī's reasoning. One is to explain the distinction between God's absolute Will expressed in two terms *irādah* and *mashī'ah*, and His satisfaction or affection (*riḍā* or *maḥabbah*), and the other is to clarify the problem between God's enjoining man to do good and His permitting him to do evil deeds.

> 1. Then he (al-Ka'bī) confronted himself with this reasoning: if the escaping of a thing from His knowledge would entail ignorance, why then should not its escaping from His Will be considered a defect, which means inability? He said that is to be said in reply: this dislike is with respect to prohibition, while the compulsion (*ghalbah*) means defect. There is also in the Book of God the proof for the distinction between *maḥabbah* or *riḍā* (satisfaction) and *irādah* or *mashī'ah* (will). For example: (a) *(God) is not satisfied with infidelity* (39: 7); (b) *(God) does not like corruption* (2: 205); (c) *Indeed, God likes those who repent* (2: 222); (d) *(God) does not like offenders* (2: 195); and He said regarding *mashī'ah: God lets go astray whom He wishes, and He lets go on straight path whom He wishes* (6: 38). These and other verses require the specification of *maḥabbah* and *riḍā* and the generalization of *irādah* and *mashī'ah*. By these last two God is

> being described and not by *riḍā* and *mahabba* because *mashī'ah* assumes power in the sense of its having the decree of force. Thus, because of this power of *mashī'ah*, (this description) is required. The reason for this is that *maḥabbah* (liking) and *sakhṭ* (disliking) are two notions which are applied to human actions and to which *mashī'ah* is not. This is because of the fact that in human actions there is no such notion of *mashī'ah*, except in the sense of satisfaction (*riḍā*) and wish (*tamannī*).[504]
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> 2. If someone said: 'If it is disgraceful to command disobediences (*ma'āṣī*), why, then, is it not disgraceful to will them to happen ? It would be said to him: 'there are several reasons for that. One of them is that there would be contradiction in the case of command, which is not the case with will. This is because an action may result from a command and therefore it is impossible that the command be disobedience because this disobedience then would become obedience (*ṭā'ah*). Therefore, the command for disobedience is meaningless. As regards the will, it is not so. Do you not see that every actor has will for his action, while it is not said that one commands himself to do his action? From this it has been established that the command and will are different.[505]

From the foregoing presentation, we can see al-Māturīdī's affirmation of the absolute will of God in terms of both His determining absolute existence and His regulating of its present and future destiny. Now, what about man and his role in determining his own actions in terms of his human power? First of all, it should be pointed out that al-Māturīdī objects to the idea of the predeterminism of the Jabrites as vehemently as he does to the idea of Free Will of the Qadarites, as we have seen above. The following are some examples of al-Māturīdī's affirmation of the power of man and his responsibility for his own actions:

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[504] *Ibid.*, pp. 296–297.
[505] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

> 1. Man is capable because God invests power in him; and it is impossible that (God) invests power in one who has no power to receive it as it is impossible also that He invest knowledge in one who has no ability to know. Is it not obvious, that if it is impossible for one who is powerful to make someone other than himself capable of doing that which he cannot, and one who is knowing to make someone other than himself knowledgeable, that this one is not capable of knowing either? ... So, if the power of God over man has been established — and that which God possesses in His power cannot be by someone other than Him — it has been established, then, that He is the Creator of that (man's power).[506]
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> 2. The Shaykh, may God have mercy on him, said: We hold that, regarding (man's power) the one who bears the name power, power is of two kinds. First, it concerns the soundness of causes (*asbāb*) and the correctness of tools (*ālāt*) which precede actions. The reality of power is not rendered for actions although these actions are not being performed except through it. It is rather a benefaction from God which He has bestowed upon whom He has wished. Then, because of it, God requires that He be praised by them as they possibly will reach the benefactions and will be able to reflect on them. This is a right statement with respect to rational faculties. That is to say, the bestowed should offer his gratitude to the bestower, should know the reality of benefaction, and should know how to retain from the denial of the bestower and for the ignorance about the benefaction. If this were not so, it would be impossible from the beginning that there be any command or

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[506] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

> prohibition. For, without (this power) preceding (the command and prohibition) in Reason, there could be no necessary reason for gratitude and the abstention from denial …
>
> The second (kind) is the notion of (power) which cannot be explained in terms of its definition in such a way as to become (known) as an object except that it is nothing more than being designated for action. It is not possible that this power exists by any means except by the way of it performing an action, when that action, is actually performed. Some people consider power to exist which is to say before the will for action, on the basis of which they explain the reason for reward and punishment '…[507]
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> 3. Also, (human) power is not known by itself for itself nor is there a definition of it by way of which its reality could be known. It is only (known) that God has made the reality of its existence from the aspect of Reason; and Reason had not existed before it was brought into existence; and its existence came through it (power). Therefore, it stands established that it (reason) testifies to its (power's) existence the moment it (Reason) was brought into existence.[508]

As we can see, al-Māturīdī manages to affirm the actual power of man, but at the same time to preserve the absolute power of God. According to him man is not a helpless toy in the hands of God, but neither is he the unquestionable master of his deeds. Man's role in performing his own actions is obvious; and God's role in enabling him to do so is undeniable.

Al-Māturīdī is aware of the contention of the Mu'tazilites that, if both God and man were involved in the same action, that this would entail rational partnership (*shirkah ma'qūlah*) between God and man, which would further assume the violation of the absolute unity of God. Al-Māturīdī dismisses this contention by simply saying:

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[507] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

[508] *Ibid.*, 261.

> ... this (contention) comes only from the premise of those who say that the creation of a thing is by other than Him (God).[509]

Having made this last point regarding al-Māturīdī's understanding of the relative power of man vis-a-vis the absolute power of God, we would like now to say a few words about his ethics.

(d) *Ethics*

The treatment of ethical problems in general, and those which concern Islam in particular, is of course a vast and diverse subject. It is neither our goal nor the scope of this study to undertake any detailed treatment of this matter. However, we would like to point out some of the most important aspects of al-Māturīdī's ethical attitudes.

First of all, it should be noted that in the course of the development of Islamic theological thought two main patterns of Islamic ethical reasoning have emerged, namely, traditional and rational. The traditional pattern assumes that:

> Values are in their essence whatever God commands. Thus they can be known only from tradition, although reason can be used in subordinate ways to extend tradition. This was the position of the major school of traditionalist theologians, the Ash'arites, and most jurists.[510]

The second, rational pattern involves the premise that:

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[509] *Ibid.*, p. 241; For more on the approaches of the Muslim *Mutakallims* to the problem of human destiny see, Gardet, *Dieu et la Destinee de l'Homme*, (Paris, 1967); Bouamrane, *Le Problème de la Liberté Humaine dans la Pensée Musulmane*, (Paris, 1978); D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'Acte Humain en Théologie Musulmane*, (Paris, 1980).

[510] See, G. Hourani, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, p. 2.

> Values have an objective existence. They can be known by independent human reason or from scriptural tradition (the Qur'ān and the tradition of Muḥammad); sometimes by both. This was the position of the Mu'tazilite theologians.[511]

Similar to this was the position of the philosophers, but with this addition:

> But they (values) are presented by a prophet to the common people in the persuasive, imaginative language of scriptural tradition.[512]

It is well known that al-Māturīdī held the rational position as opposed to the traditional one of al-Ash'arī, the Ash'arites, and the majority of the jurists. As an orthodox Muslim, al-Māturīdī's rational way in Islamic ethics should be considered as his most valuable contribution to Islamic theology. In fact this is one of the most important areas where the Islamic orthodoxy needed help after al-Ash'arī's failure to see things concerning Islamic ethics more realistically and naturally.

However, while al-Māturīdī's approach to Islamic ethics is recognizably different from the traditional one of al-Ash'arī, his rational approach is not identical with that of the Mu'tazilites either. I think that the rationality of the ethics of the Mu'tazilites is more subjective in the sense of Reason's total free will, while al-Māturīdī's is more objective in the sense of an inseparable connection between the value of a thing and the ability of Reason to recognize, but not to make, that concerned value. Both the objective reality of a thing and Reason come from God, and therefore there cannot be a discrepancy between them as to the former's reality and the latter's ethical judgement. So, as we shall soon see, al-Māturīdī makes a clear distinction between pure rational and disposed, or subjective, habitual ethics; and he gives preference to the former.

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[511] *Ibid.*
[512] *Ibid.*

We have already seen how al-Māturīdī has made a distinction between the notion of *qaḍā'*, or the absolute initial Will and Power of God, and that of *qadar*, or the perpetual continuation of that Will and Power of God. It is through His *qadar* that God determines the details of things in terms of their beauty or ugliness, goodness or evilness and so forth. Thus, al-Māturīdī explains:

> Then, after God had created men for the purpose of temptation, which is based on the fact that He made them among those who are able to recognize and know good manners and evil ones, and after He had made that which is shameful to be ugly to their Reason and that which is praiseworthy to be beautiful (to it), He glorified in their minds that they prefer beautiful to ugly, and that they have a desire for that which is praiseworthy over that which is shameful ...[513]

Hence al-Māturīdī holds that Reason has the ability to value good and evil things, but only inasmuch as these things are made by God to be so, and not because man's language is so eloquent that it makes certain things good when, in fact, they are not. Thus, al-Māturīdī says:

> ... although speech (*kalām*) and phrases (*'ibārāt*) may sound different to listeners in terms of the beauty or ugliness of things, their reality does not change by the changing of that speech and expressions. It is possible that an expression be said in two different languages and that in one of these two languages that expression be more beautiful than in the other. Nevertheless, neither the beauty nor the truth in themselves become different by the different people who express them.

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[513] *Ibid.*, p. 221.

> Therefore, the beauty of things is not to be judged in accordance with the disposition of human nature (*ṭab' al-khilqah*) nor in accordance with the beauty of expression, but rather it is to be judged in accordance with Reason, which does not see beauty as ugliness. Reason, then, is the principle on the basis of which all other things are to be settled.[514]

On the basis of this assertion, al-Māturīdī makes the clear distinction between rational and habitual ethical values. Man considers killing and slaughtering as ugly because he is not used to that, while animals do not see them that way because they are used to that. But if an animal is domesticated and trained not to kill, it also will lose that habitual tendency to kill.[515] The same goes for man. His ethical values may well depend on the environment he lives in and his natural disposition. Therefore, human ethical values must always keep close to the principle of Reason, in which God invested the power of insight into what is really beautiful and what is ugly.

In conclusion, al-Māturīdī's Reason does not make ethical values of good or evil things, but it rather has the ability to recognize those universal principles of goodness and evilness, an ability which should be trusted because it was given to him by God. In other words, we know that something is good or evil and true or false because that something is so in itself and because of the fact that there is a strong connection between that something and our Reason, both of which come from God. Therefore, a certain truth or falsehood is not only in Reason, but also in the object which is under Reason's consideration.

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[514] *Tawḥīd*, p. 224.

[515] *Ibid.*, p. 223.

Chapter Four

Al-Māturīdī‘s Influence

If the greatness of a theologian were to be measured by the amount of biographical and historical data about him in terms of his life and intellectual achievements, al-Māturīdī’s name would not occupy a high position on the list of the greatest Muslim theologians; but if that greatness is to be measured by the originality of his theological method and ideas, al-Māturīdī is one of the most serious candidates for the first place on that list.

Al-Māturīdī gained his reputation among the orthodox theologians neither through the fame of his immediate teachers nor through the endeavor of his immediate students. Rather, he earned that reputation through his own intellectual effort and his own theological originality. As far as Islamic theology is concerned, none of his teachers — about whom we have talked in chapter one — can be compared with al-Ash‘arī’s teacher al-Jubbā’ī or al-Ghazālī’s teacher al-Juwainī in terms of their theological pursuit and their popularity among the *Mutakallims* .

As for al-Māturīdī’s immediate students, four of them are the most conspicuous, namely, Abū al-Qāsim Isḥāq al-Samarqandī, famous as al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī (d. 340/951), ‘Alī al-Rustughfānī (d. 350/961), ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Mūsā al-Bazdawī (d. 390/1001), and Abū al-Laith al-Bukhārī (date of death unknown). Only two of them wrote books; al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī wrote: (a) *‘Aqīdat al-Imām*; (b) *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*; (c) *al-Sawād al-A‘ẓam ;* and (d) *Risālah fī bayān anna al-īmān juz’ min islām*, and ‘Alī al-Rustughfānī wrote: (a) *Kitāb al-Irshād al-Muhtadī;* (b) *Kitāb al-Zawā’id wa al-Fawā’id fī Anwā‘ al-‘Ulūm;* and (c) *Kitāb al-Khilāf* (d) *al-As’ilah wa al-Ajwibah* . Except for the works (c) and (d) of al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī and the work (d) of al- Rustughfānī none of these works are extant. Both *Al-Sawād al-A‘ẓam* and *Risālah* ... have been published,[516] while *al-As'ilah wa al-Ajwibah* is available only in ms.[517] The *Sawād* is the oldest theological work in accordance with the Māturīdite school. In it al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī has developed sixty-two credal statements, the failure to observe them means that one cannot be regarded among the majority of Muslims (*al-sawād al-a'ẓam*), an idea which he based on a *Ḥadīth* .[518]

While *al-Sawād al-A'ẓam* of al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī may have contributed to the spread of the basic points of al-Māturīdī's doctrine, I do not think that it represents a true evaluation of al-Māturīdī's essential theological ideas. I do not think that al-Māturīdī would be very satisfied with the idea of sixty-two credal statements because there could possibly be more than that, and because of his educational orientation which pretend to deal with theological issues rather than indoctrinational ones as, apparently, was the aim of al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī.

But a more serious evaluation of al-Māturīdī's theological thought began more than a century later by Fakhr al-Islām 'Alī al-Bazdawī (d. 482/1089),[519] and was continued by a number of great masters of Māturīdism. The following are the names and works of the most important interpreters and promoters of the theological school of al-Māturīdī:

(1) Ṣadr al-Islām Abū al-Yusr Muḥammad al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1099)[520]
 – *Uṣūl al-Dīn*
(2) Abū al-Mu'īn Maymūn b. Muḥammad al-Makḥūlī al-Nasafī (d. 508/1114)[521]

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[516] See, GAS, p. 606.

[517] According to GAS (Arabic version), [p. 382] a ms. of this work is available at Murad Mulā 1829 (154a–176b, copied in the tenth century of Hijra) .

[518] Cf. Rotter, *Islam* XVIII, 41.

[519] 'Alī al-Bazdawī wrote *Uṣūl al-Bazdawī* , cf. *Fawā'id* , p. 124.

[520] Cf. *Fawā'id* , p. 188.

[521] *Ibid.*, pp. 116–117.

- *Tabṣirat al-Adillah*
- *Tamhīd li Qawā'id al-Tawḥīd*
- *Baḥr al-Kalām*

(3) Najm al-Dīn 'Umar al-Nasafī Muftī al-Thaqalayn (d. 537/1142)[522]
- *al-'Aqīdah al-Nasafiyyah* [It is said that he wrote about 100 books]

(4) 'Alā' al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (d. 540/1145)[523]
- *Tuḥfat al-Fuqahā'*
- *Sharḥ Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*

(5) Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ṣābūnī (d. 580/1185)[524]
- *al-Hidāyah*
- *al-Bidāyah fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*
- *Kitāb al-'Umdah*

(6) Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt 'Abdullāh al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310)[525]
- *al-'Umdah*
- *al-I'timād* [*Sharḥ al-'Umdah*]

(7) 'Ubaidullah Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah al-Maḥbūbī (d. 747/1348)[526]
- *Ta'dīl al-'Ulūm*
- *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*

(8) 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Abdulazīz al-Bukhārī (730/1329)[527]
- *Kashf al-Asrār*

(9) 'Alī al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413)[528]
- *al-Ta'rīfāt*
- *al-Mawāqif*

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[522] *Ibid.*, pp. 149–250.
[523] *Ibid.*, p. 157.
[524] *Ibid.*, p. 42; Murtaḍā, II, p. 3.
[525] *Fawā'id*, 102.
[526] *Ibid.*, pp. 109–110.
[527] See, 'Ala'al-Dīn 'Abdulazīz, *Kashf al-Asrār 'an Uṣūl Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī*, (Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, Beyrout, 1394/1974).
[528] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

(10) Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn
al-Humāmah (d. 861/1455)[529]
– *al-Musāyarah fī al-Qawā'id al-Munjiyah fī al-Ākhirah*
(11) Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Rūmī Shams al-Dīn Kamāl
Paŝa (940/1533)[530]
– *Tajrīd al-Tajrīd*
– *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah li Khawājah Zādah*
(12) 'Alī b. Sulṭān Muḥammad al-Makkī Mulā 'Alī al-Qārī
(d1014/125)[531]
– *Sharḥ 'alā al-Fiqh al-Akbar*
(13) Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Bayāḍī (d. 1083/1672)
– *Ishārāt al-Marām min 'Ibārāt al-Imām*
(14) Hasan Kafia Pruščak Basnawī (d. 1025/1616)
– *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī al-I'tiqādāt*

Doubtless, each of these prominent Ḥanafite scholars has contributed greatly in his own way to the promotion, understanding and spread of al-Māturīdī's theological views. But, it seems that *al-'Aqīdah al-Nasafiyyah* of Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī took the lead in this activity. Although not explicitly related to al-Māturīdī, both the methodology and substance of this work are unmistakably traceable to his influence; and it was concise, eloquent and synthetic. *Al-'Aqīdah* not only became a textbook for the Māturīdites, but also attracted many Ash'arites scholars, a best example of which is the Ash'arite al-Taftāzānī who wrote an extensive commentary on it. Next in importance for elaborating al-Māturīdī's doctrine is *Tabṣirat al-Adillah* of Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī (has been published). Thus through the works of these two Nasafīs and the rest of the above mentioned Ḥanafite scholars, the doctrine of Sunnism was provided with the vital element of Māturīdism whose procedure and structure both would be completely different without it.

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[529] *Ibid.*, p. 180.
[530] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[531] Cf. *al-Ta'līqāt al-Sunniyah 'alā al-Fawā'id al-Bahiyyah*, p. 8.

(a) *Māturīdism*

It is a well known fact among students of Islam that the science of *Fiqh* represents the earliest model for Islamic cultural activity in general. Striving for a creation of the Muslim community based on the law of Islamic ethics and morality, the early Muslim scholars found the field of jurisprudence to be the most important aspect of that presupposed Muslim ethical society. Although mainly practical in its objective, the early study of *Fiqh* included in its substance the necessary theoretical aspect of Islamic theology as well. In short, the early science of *Fiqh* covered all perspectives of Muslims' theoretical and practical religious life.

Faced with diverse problems which life posed and with different theoretical and practical possibilities for the solution of those problems, the early jurists learned to tolerate opposing views and thus to be syncretic in their approaches to different religious issues. Thus, the presence of four main Islamic legal schools, coupled with two other less important ones, i.e., the Shi'ite and the Ẓāhirite, was never really a problem for the Islamic orthodoxy. To adopt either the Mālikite, or the Ḥānafite, or the Shāfi'ite, or the Ḥanbalite, and in lesser degree the Shi'ite and the Ẓāhirite *madhhab* was and still is regarded natural among orthodox Muslims. In fact, there are no official Muslim heretics with regard to issues of *Fiqh* .

However, this was not the case with Islamic theology. Starting as early as the emergence of the heresy of 'Abdullāh b. Saba', then that of Mu'bad al-Juhanī (d. 80 H.), Ghailān al-Dimashqī (125 H.), Jahm b. Safwān (d. 128 H.) and others, Islamic theology has always been full of controversial views, charges and counter-charges. But, perhaps the most striking event which helped these irreconcilable theological views to develop, was al-Ma'mūn's adoption of the rational theology of the Mu'tazilites in the beginning of the second century of Islam, and, in turn, his attempt to forcefully impose the Mu'tazilite doctrine on the Muslim population through the power of the state.

As is well known, this state-imposed theology did not survive long. It was, however, replaced by an equally intolerant theology of the traditionalists. Therefore, in the context of these facts of Islamic history, and because of the need for a balanced theological pursuit, the serious Muslim thinker had to undertake the task of creating a synthetic, Sunnite theological perspective. Al-Māturīdī in the far east, al-Ash'arī in the middle and al-Ṭaḥāwī in the far west of the Muslim empire in the ninth–tenth century were reliable for the purpose and suitable to the task.

Ever since the emergence of these three great Sunnite thinkers, it is firmly believed that Islamic theological thought has been saved from both the right pole of the traditionalists and the left pole of the rationalists. But, edified by the example of *Fiqh*, orthodox Muslims were able, within the framework of the labor of these three scholars, to adopt the particular view of one or another of these respective theologians, or even to integrate the opinions of all of them into their special theological outlook. Thus, Islamic theology finally was freed from the burden of heresy, and, just like Islamic jurisprudence, was abundantly provided with air by way of which it could freely breathe in its own confined area.

Ayyub Ali's observation that unlike the Ash'arites after al-Ash'arī, the Māturīdites did not add anything substantial to the theological thought of al-Māturīdī, is correct. To support this he gave three explanations: (1) that the Māturīdites were more preoccupied with the issues of *Fiqh* than with those of *Kalām* and were not very well trained in *Kalām* to add something new to it; (2) that the foundation of the Ḥanafite-Māturīdite theological thought was made by Abū Ḥanīfah and then perfected by al-Māturīdī to which little really could be added; while, in fact, al-Ash'arī only started his theological foundation which had to be completed by his successors; and (3) that the opposition to Ash'arism from both the Ḥanbalites and the Mu'tazilites prompted further and deeper investigation by the Ash'arites for the purpose of the defense of Ash'arism.[532]

All these explanations could be well taken into consideration. However, I think that the most probable reason why the Ash'arism of the Ash'arites is different and more advanced than al-Ash'arī's thought itself, whereas the Māturīdism of the Māturīdites is identical with that of al-Māturīdī, – lies in the fact that al-Ash'arī's theological thought *per se* has no definite methodological system, while that of al-Māturīdī definitely has, as we have seen in the course of our study. In other words, al-Ash'arī was more of a theological indoctrinator than an educator, or he was more interested in telling the people what to believe than how to believe. On the other hand, al-Māturīdī developed a system of theological reasoning that gave his successors a guideline by means of which they could always search for new doctrinal possibilities, yet never get off the path of the main traits of his doctrine.

It is exactly in view of this fact that we see the reason for the development of Māturīdism within the frame of the Sunnite theological thought. And, I dare to say, had it not been for the rivalry between the Shāfi'ites and the Ḥanafites, as the two most traditional-rational legal schools, and had it not been for the fact that al-Māturīdī lived far from the center of the Islamic empire, Māturīdism would have prevailed among the majority of the Muslim theologians. In fact, a thorough scrutiny into the theology of al-Ash'arī and that of al-Māturīdī and a serious comparison of them with the later theological thought of both the Ash'arites and the Māturīdites will show how close, almost identical, is the theological method of al-Māturīdī with the method of all of those theologians and, on the other hand, how short of that is the method of al-Ash'arī. Therefore, if we are looking for a theologian who gave the best direction for methodology in Islamic theology, like the one which was given by al-Shāfiʿī in Islamic jurisprudence, al-Māturīdī indisputably is the most eligible candidate for that honor.

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[532] Cf. Ali, pp. 387–390.

If then we wish to sum up the influence of the theological thought of al-Māturīdī on orthodox Islamic theology, we would firmly say that it comes from his theory of knowledge, his ability to synthesize Tradition and Reason, and his deep loyalty to the basic Islamic dogmas.

(b) *A modern theological perspective*

It is amazing how prolific the Muslim scholars of the second, third, fourth and fifth centuries of Islam were in all areas of intellectual activity; and it is even more amazing how Muslims of the modern times have lost contact with this rich intellectual legacy which is by all standards unprecedented in history. This especially holds true of Islamic theology. It is not only that a few Muslims today are able to offer new theological ideas to the world arena of thought, but also that few of them are really familiar with the greatness of their own past. Of course, some Muslims glorify this historic legacy of Islam day and night, but benefit little from that great experience of their predecessors. They sometimes go so far into the past that they lose the track to come back to the present and to plan for the future. If Muslims are ever to get out of their present intellectual stalemate, they must learn from their past legacy rather than blindly and meaninglessly glorify it. They must live, think and work as their predecessors did in their given times.

Although more than a millennium distant from our times, al-Māturīdī's theological approach may be well applied to our own problems and his solutions may well give us a true sense of the synthesis of Tradition with Reason. Moreover, his natural, unbiased, and sincere way of thinking is an edifying example of an honest and serious Muslim scholar; his sense of analysis and his critical scholarly eye may attract even the most serious scholars of our times. Al-Māturīdī writes not to flatter or convert, nor to immediately impress or attract his reader, but rather he writes because God gave him the mind to think and because there are many things in this world to reflect upon.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the theological pursuits of one of the greatest Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth century, Muḥammad 'Abduh, can easily be identified with that of al-Māturīdī. Al-Māturīdī, then, rather than al-Ash'arī, should be the model for a serious modern orthodox theological perspective. For, al-Māturīdī's theological thought is not controversial, not political and is more natural and educational than al-Ash'arī's.

CONCLUSION

I am sure that the reader of this study will have reached his own conclusions, critical points, and, hopefully, some new insights about Islamic theology in general and about al-Māturīdī's thought in particular. However, I would like to point out three most striking conclusions, or, if you wish, discoveries I have reached during this study concerning the development of Islamic theology and the role al-Māturīdī played in that development.

First, the discovery and publication of al-Māturīdī's *K. Tawḥīd* calls for a thorough revision of the understanding of the genesis and development of Islamic theology that have been prevalent so far among students of Islam in both East and West. It has been generally accepted as a matter of fact that the process of Islamic orthodox thought started with al-Ash'arī, that its basic methodology was worked out by al-Baghdādī, and that its details were mostly perfected by the Ash'arites. As our study has shown, none of these assertions can survive insight of the contents of al-Māturīdī's *K. Tawḥīd.* We have seen that al-Māturīdī's orthodox movement was prior to that of al-Ash'arī; that his theory of knowledge is comprehensive and very identical with that of al-Baghdādī; and that the development of Islamic theology in the post-Ash'arī-Māturīdī period was equally shared by both the Ash'arites and the Māturīdītes.

Secondly, the relationship of al-Māturīdī's theological thought to philosophy must be more seriously taken into consideration in any further study of his theology. Our study has shown that al-Māturīdī was not only aware of the philosophic problems circulating at the time, but he himself greatly contributed to their solutions. He was familiar with Aristotle's logic and was able to develop his own logical method for theological reasoning. A thorough study of the connection of his thought with that of two prominent philosophers of the time, i.e., al-Kindī and al-Fārābī, would be extremely helpful in tracing the roots of synthetic theology in Islam.

Finally, considering these two above mentioned facts, the third conclusion follows that al-Māturīdī's contribution to Islamic theology in general and to Sunnism in particular must be re-evaluated. We mean by this that his *K. Tawḥīd* must be carefully studied and thoroughly compared with other important theological and philosophical schools of the time, and his *Ta'wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah* must be completely edited, published and studied comparatively with *K. Tawḥīd*.

In conclusion, we would like to say that this study is only a preliminary attempt on our part to pay duly deserved homage to one of the greatest, but somewhat forgotten, early Muslims theologians, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī. We hope that we will be able to continue to give his works our further and more comprehensive attention.

والله اعلم بالصواب والحمد لله رب العالمين
والصلاة والسلام على اشرف الانبياء والمرسلين
وعلى اله واصحبه والتابعين لهم باحسان
الى يوم الدين

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